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BALANCING READING MOTIVATION: A COMPARATIVE CASE STUDY OF HIGH  
SCHOOL STUDENTS AND THEIR TEACHERS

A dissertation submitted to  
The University of Mississippi,  
In partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree  
Doctor of Philosophy  
Graduate Program in Curriculum and Instruction

By  
PASTEIA GARTH

May 2019

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## **ABSTRACT**

The purpose of this study is to understand how teachers successfully balance instruction in a high stakes tested classroom environment to promote reading motivation.. To analyze, I will focus on two 10th grade English classroom, two 10th grade English teachers, and eight 10th grade students who are identified as proficient readers. One teacher has 19 years of teaching experience with only one of those years being a high school English teacher. The other teacher has twelve years of teaching experience of teaching high school, and this is her eighth year teaching 10th grade.

## **ACKNOWLEDGMENTS**

My success in the PhD program would not have been possible without my dissertation chair who challenged and encouraged me before and during the process. Thanks to the rest of dissertation committee, your expertise and guidance were needed and necessary. All of you are what I aspire to be, an educator who is committed to excellence. Thank you to my sweet girls, Kinlyn, Avie, and Jaime for being my inspiration.

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## **CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION**

Some of my fondest childhood memories come from my love of reading. Othermama, my mother's oldest sister, put books into my hand before I could talk or walk. The established bedtime routine set for me ended with her rendition of a book of my choice. Her voice, rising and falling with the command of the English language, captivated me. I wanted to read just like her. Trips to the library fed my curiosity and satisfied my joy of reading. Meal time conversations about the latest book I had read kept the love of reading growing. Books took me places that money could not. Eventually, my love for reading led me to the profession of teaching. Wanting to give students the same opportunities reading had given me, I filled my classroom with books. The more students I came across, the more books I accumulated in an attempt to spark the students' interests. Reading led students to discuss, to debate, to research, to write, to present, and to think about various topics and issues. Sometimes, students would be so caught up in their reading and discussions that the bell was a distraction, not a dismissal. At a time when standardized testing was becoming the norm, it was not the talk of our class; reading was the heartbeat of our class, and year after year, students consistently performed well on state-mandated assessments.

Today, from I spy sight words on road trips to bedtime renditions of their favorite books,

I pass my love for reading to my daughters. Avie, my middle child, is a book lover, and she reads for the enjoyment, so imagine the shock I felt when she came home from kindergarten and announced, “I don’t like reading anymore!”

Imagine my surprise the next morning, when I casually mentioned Avie’s shared feelings, and the teacher smiled and said, “Oh, don’t worry about Avie! She is one of my brightest students! She has a 100 average in reading! She is going to do great on MKAAS (the end of the year state assessment).” Despite the teacher’s assurance, I left feeling very worried, worried that school, in its attempt to educate my child, had caused her to hate reading. The rest of the year proved challenging because Avie rushed through required readings out of obedience. She began to view reading as a chore. Reading was no longer exciting.

### **Statement of the Problem**

Though effective reading requires cognitive ability and motivation (Hinchman& Sheridan-Thomas 2014), national initiatives sought to improve literacy with efforts focused on understanding reading cognition, on developing readers, and on bringing struggling readers up to grade level (O’Brien & Dillion in Hinchman& Sheridan-Thomas 2014). A direct result of this national focus was a published report from the National Reading Panel. This report was the foundation for providing the nation with research fundamental for developing readers and research-based strategies for struggling readers. Careful not to leave out a population, the report made implications for secondary students, providing guidance for students who are below grade level. The research was useful for the nation because congress authorized more academic accountability in schools, and to meet adequate yearly progress (AYP) on reading based

assessments, states and local school districts implemented some of the strategies mentioned in the National Reading Panel report. Proficient and advanced students--those students who enter school ahead of their peers, who enter school with knowledge of reading concepts, and who have the cognitive ability to perform average or above average on state mandated assessments--were left out of the research because these students are not seen as contributors to the nation's reading crisis. I beg to differ. Consistent low proficient scores on The National Assessment of Education Progress (NAEP) make clear that that proficient readers are in fact contributing to the nation's reading crisis. Since 2011, eighth grade students' reading proficiency rates have remained between 34% and 36% , indicating that the nation's brightest students are underperforming (National Center for Educational Statistics 2017).

Moreover, the nation's focus on reading cognition has led educators and researchers to focus on performance standards, evaluation, and achievement, leaving research for student motivation scarce and teachers with misconceptions about the construct (O'Brien & Dillion in Hinchman & Sheridan-Thomas 2014). A research study done in an educational setting revealed the common misconceptions among teachers about motivation: (1) Motivation is something someone has or does not have; (2) Motivation is connected to self-discipline; (3) Motivation is immediate; and (4) Motivation is a nonrenewable source (O'Brien & Dillion in Hinchman & Sheridan-Thomas 2014). Researchers diffuse these misconceptions, explaining that motivation is a result of experiences (O'Brien & Dillion in Hinchman & Sheridan-Thomas 2014). Though teachers have the power to improve student motivation (Hinchman & Sheridan-Thomas 2014), an instructional imbalance of focusing on performance over mastery causes them to fail to meet the needs of students who understand performance but need help with mastery (Gambrell 2012).

School climate becomes increasingly more performance-based as students move through school (O'Brien & Dillon in Hinchman & Sheridan-Thomas 2014), intrinsic motivation is overlooked, and many of the students who enter school ready to learn are in need of the intrinsic motivation to keep them from becoming bored with mundane classroom activities that require little to no effort. The motivation to cultivate their innate ability and talents die.

Too often, educators foster one side of motivation: extrinsic motivation--working towards a reward. While extrinsic motivation is great for sparking short-term interest and goals, research shows that it does not have long-term effects (Ryan & Deci 2017).

### **Purpose of the Study**

Guthrie (2008) explains that many students have a common school experience that decreases their reading motivation. Increased accountability in the form of state assessments is a phenomenon that impacts school environments. School environments impact school classrooms, and the classroom environment impacts students' motivation. English II is a high school course in which students must take and pass a reading-based assessment to graduate high school. Because the test is reading-based, the researcher chose to explore students' reading motivation in hopes of extending research about school environment and student motivation. Therefore, the purpose of this comparative case study is to give tenth grade students who are identified as proficient readers an opportunity to describe their reading experiences in a high stakes tested environment to give a glimpse of their reading instruction. This research gives first-hand knowledge about which instructional practices students perceive to promote or hinder reading motivation. This research provides insight about how students perceive external and

internal pressures of standardized testing, and how their perceptions impact reading motivation in their tenth grade English class.

Using convenience sampling, the researcher chose two high school English teachers and eight high school students, four per teacher. To begin the sampling process, the researcher chose 16 students per teacher from the population with the highest scale score in the proficiency range on the Mississippi Academic Assessment Program (MAAP) given at the end of their eighth grade year. After receiving back signed permission from students, the researcher took a sample of eight students to interview about classroom experiences with reading and instructional practices. As an added measure of validity, the researcher also interviewed teachers and conducted classroom observations to confirm accuracy of the students' shared experiences of the instructional practices used in their classroom.

Until we study students who are proficient readers and who are involved in high stakes classroom environments, we cannot gain an understanding of what motivates their reading. As a result of our lack of understanding, an instructional imbalance will continue, and proficiency scores on national assessments will continue to be stagnant because the students who have the potential to change those scores are stuck in classrooms that too often focus on improving students' performance rather than fostering their innate abilities.

## **Research Questions**

### **Research Aim**

During the study, the researcher critically analyzed the classroom environment of two tenth grade English teachers, exploring one class that has been successful at implementing balanced classroom instruction that promotes reading motivation and one class which has not



been successful. After analyzing the differences between the successful and unsuccessful classroom environments, the researcher focused on the following research question: How do teachers successfully balance reading motivation in a high stakes tested high school English class? This question will be answered for each classroom in the form of Using a comparative case study analysis, the research questions will on each classroom environment.

### **Research Questions**

1. What do proficient readers identify as having an impact on their school experience-- instruction, classroom climate, reading motivation?
2. What do students who are proficient readers perceive to be their biggest challenge with reading motivation in school?
3. What do students who are proficient readers perceive to help them be successful with reading motivation in school?

### **Significance of the Study**

The study is significant in many ways. First and foremost, this study will add research to reading motivation. Currently, many studies explain the correlation of motivation to reading, but rarely does research give voice to readers who have the ability to read but lack motivation to do so. This study will view reading motivation from the perspective of proficient readers. Most research for adolescent readers focuses on the struggling reader. Teachers are left with strategies to apply, and many times those strategies do not lead to significant gains in reading performance. NAEP proficiency scores are less than 40%, and it is imperative that research is

done to include students who have the potential to score a proficient score. This study is unique in that it will enable both students and teachers to express their views and share their knowledge and experiences to improve the educational experience of reading motivation in the English classroom. The commonalities and discrepancies among the students and teachers will affirm or disprove current research about high school students' reading experiences. Ultimately, the study may encourage secondary students to view reading from a different perspective as well as encourage the secondary teacher to reflect and implement changes to classroom practices that will encourage reading motivation. Last but not least, this research will add to the wealth of research about Self-Determination Theory (SDT), a theory concerned with intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. Though research for each mini theory of SDT has been done independently, the majority of the research has been quantitative. The study will add a comprehensive qualitative aspect to Self-Determination Theory (SDT) research. This comprehensive study is needed for one to understand how each theory of SDT relates to others, and how each mini theory impacts the external factors of the classroom.

### **Research Bias**

Though the researcher is now a practicing school administrator, she taught middle and high school English for ten years. As an administrator, her role includes conducting teacher observations and providing feedback. As a result of her prior and current experiences, the researcher has her beliefs and assumptions about best practices. One idea is that students are not motivated to read because of classroom environment. Teachers either do not provide opportunities for reading or do not offer opportunities according to student interests and needs of

relatedness, competence, and autonomy. This belief leads the researcher to the assumption that if the classroom environment is one that offers multiple opportunities for reading and includes students' interests, as well as needs for relatedness, competence, and autonomy, students will engage in reading. Another belief is that due to the accountability measures, teachers dedicate most of their time to struggling readers. This belief leads to the assumption that proficient students' needs are not met because they are not a priority. To keep the researcher's beliefs and assumptions from interrupting the goal of this phenomenological study, the researcher created observable constructs for which to look when observing the classroom.

### **Limitations**

Though qualitative research is not necessarily generalizable to other context, it is valuable in helping researchers answer “why” questions related to education. Furthermore, unlike quantitative research, the sample size is a limitation of qualitative research. This study is no different with its size of two teachers and eight students. Other limitations include subjectivity, credibility, and reliability of the researcher. As an effort to remain reliable and credible, the researcher will notate in a reflective journal her background of English education and teaching experience of 15 years before conducting the study so that she does not impose her biases and ideas on participants of the study. To ensure accuracy, the researcher will record and transcribe interviews. When the researcher gives the teachers a final copy of the observations, she will also discuss comments as a way of clarifying any view as ill perceived. This discussion will likely lead to more insight of the teachers' intended purpose of a lesson, activity, or action.

Another concern is that the researcher has an administrator-teacher relationship with one of the teacher participants of the study. The participant may perform in a way they feel is pleasing or acceptable to the researcher. However, the researcher explained in the consent form that the study is an exploratory one in which the goal is to explore the reading motivation and instruction in the English classroom without judgment. Furthermore, the researcher had each participant sign a confidentiality form. The researcher also explained to the participants that their participation was voluntary and that they could opt out of the study at any point.

### **Organization**

The remaining four chapters will be divided as follows: Chapter Two will provide a literature review about the background and educational research of Self-Determination Theory in an attempt to explain the importance of promoting a balanced approach for encouraging reading motivation in high school English classrooms. Chapter Three will describe the methodology, participants, and data collection procedures of the comparative case study. Chapter Four will discuss the findings, and Chapter Five will conclude with a summary of the results and recommendations for further research.

### **Summary**

This study will provide researchers with insight into students who may have the potential to positively impact student performance on standardized testing such as NAEP and mandated state assessments. Equally important, this research could be a gateway for improving reading instruction for those capable yet unmotivated students. Students' experiences will identify what

works well for them as well as what does not work at all. Overall, the findings could help with education reform in the area of adolescent reading motivation and performance

## **CHAPTER II: REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE**

### **Introduction**

In today's test-driven school systems, "Valuing reading is often a euphemism for preparing students to pass mandated multiple-choice exams, and in dragging students down this path, schools are largely contributing to readicide-- the systematic killing of the love of reading, often exacerbated by the innate, mind-numbing practices found in school" (Gallagher 2009). Though strengthening intrinsic motivation develops resilience, perseverance, self actualization, and a growth mindset (Fonseca 2015), and has been associated with positive outcomes of more interest, confidence, persistence, enhanced performance, and creativity (Ryan &Deci 2017), many educators focus more on the external regulation of behavior than on intrinsic motivation (Ryan &Deci 2000). As a result, classrooms are filled with what Guthrie (2008) identifies as extrinsically motivated students, students who have the ability to read but have no interest beyond meeting external demands of tests, quizzes, or deadlines. Unfortunately, students become consumed with completing tasks to appease a request (Ryan &Deci 2000) instead of completing an activity for the enjoyment of the activity (Ryan &Deci 2000). Pressured by the short term goal of reaching adequate yearly progress (AYP), many teachers unconsciously create classroom climates that either destroy or undermine students' innate desire for learning (Deci& Ryan 2002).

High school English teachers have the responsibility of not only teaching standards of reading but also of fostering each student's motivation to read (Gambrell 2012). However, with the pressure to perform on state assessments, many classroom teachers find it difficult to find a balance of doing both (Gallagher 2009). As a result of this instructional imbalance, a student's innate tendency to cultivate self is overlooked, causing the student to become passive to [reading] (Ryan & Deci 2000; Deci & Ryan 2002; Ryan & Deci 2017). Self-Determination Theory (SDT), a macro theory of human motivation and personality, fosters the idea that social contextual factors either support or hinder this innate tendency to cultivate self interests and values (Deci & Ryan 2002), and when one's need for autonomy (self) is overlooked, his intrinsic motivation is compromised. To following literature review gives an overview of self-determination theories, classrooms that promote self-determination, and criticism of self-determination.

### **Self Determination Theories (Background)**

The highest level of achievement is typically the result of non-intellectual factors (Fonseca 2015). Educationally, SDT is concerned with non-intellectual factors of promoting students' interests, values, and confidence (Deci et al. 2011; Guthrie 2008). Psychologists Edward Deci and Ryan Richard began the work of SDT with the exploration of the impact external factors have on intrinsic motivation. In itself, this was a new concept because up until the introduction of SDT, behaviorist theorists were concerned with only observable behavior, excluding internal factors such as intrinsic motivation. Figure 1 shows how five mini-theories work together to explore internal factors of intrinsic motivation.



Figure 1. Self-Determination Mini Theories.



The literature review that follows will give an overview of each theory.

Cognitive Evaluation Theory (CET), the first theory of SDT, is primarily concerned with environments that support, undermine, or deplete a person's self-determination (autonomy). To determine the impact that external factors have on intrinsic motivation, Deci (1971) tested the effect monetary compensation would have on participants' engagement of the desired tasks of putting together puzzles. The reward groups received payment for each solved puzzle, while the control group received nothing for puzzle completion and had no knowledge of the possibility of receiving payment. When given an opportunity for free choice, rewarded participants engaged in activities other than their desired choice of puzzles, demonstrating a decrease in their intrinsic motivation. Completing puzzles for a reward undermined completing the puzzle for enjoyment. In a subsequent study, participants received money for showing up, not for engaging or completing a task. The findings showed no decrease in intrinsic motivation, demonstrating that not all extrinsic rewards are undermining; the effects of the reward were dependent upon how it was administered and experienced. With preschool students, Lepper, Greene, and Nisbett (1973) replicated the study, and the findings validated Deci's research. Ross (1975) proved that rewards are undermining to intrinsic motivation when they are salient. This undermining effect extends to impersonal relationships as well. Ryan and Connell (1989) applied SDT to the workplace interpersonal relationships and found that intrinsic motivation lowered when workers felt that their boss tried to control them; as a result of perceived controlled environments, extrinsic motivation increased as workers only worked for higher pay or a promotion.

Though initial findings for SDT found extrinsic motivation to have an undermining effect on intrinsic motivation, it was found that a person's internal locus casualty shifted from internal

to external, leaving the person perceiving the activity as controlling, not as something of their own choice (Deci & Ryan 1994). However, other studies found that extrinsic motivation does not always undermine intrinsic motivation: Harackiewicz (1979) conducted a study using high school students, and extrinsic motivation in the form of positive feedback sustained intrinsic motivation. As a result, SDT was expanded to include an extrinsic regulation component (Ryan & Deci 1999). The second theory of SDT, Organismic Integration Theory (OIT), explains how extrinsically motivated behaviors become self-determined (Ryan & Deci 1994).

Individuals have an innate desire to feel effective, so they internalize external factors in an attempt to become self-determined (Ryan & Deci 1994). Internalization can be broken down into four types of self-regulatory styles: Integrated Regulation, Identified Regulation, Introjected Regulation, and External Regulation. Figure 2 gives an explanation of each style in relation to being truly intrinsically motivated and unmotivated.

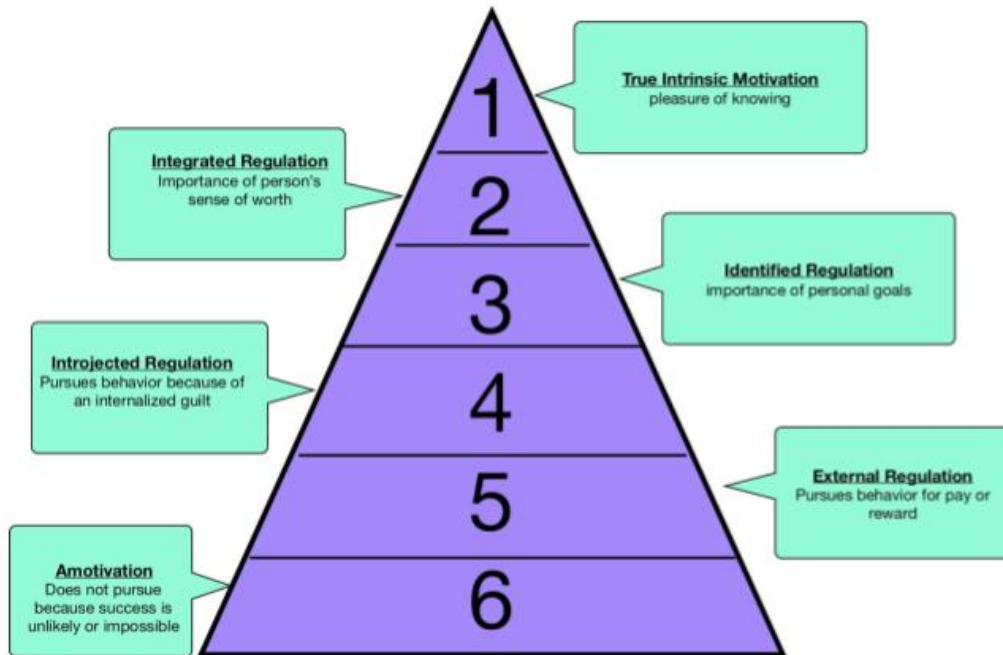


Figure 2. Organismic Integration Theory (OIT) Behaviors.

The literature review that follows gives an overview of each regulation. External regulation is the use of reward or punishment (Ryan & Connell 1989; Ryan & Deci 2017). OIT builds that case as the External Perceived Locus Causality (E-PLOC) of an individual increases, the person begins performing with the expectancy of receiving a certain reward or punishment (Ryan & Deci 2017). For example, if a student fails to complete an assignment, he gets a punishment. However, if he does well on an assignment, he gets a reward in the form of verbal praise, grades, or a tangible reward. This type of regulation is the lowest form, and many students stop here when they learn to comply to requests in order to receive an award (Ryan & Deci 2017). Introjected behavior regulation is similar to external regulation in that it is a controlled behavior. Introjected is controlled by internal feelings of “should” behaviors and negative consequences if “should” is not met (Ryan et al. 1983). As a result, a person commits to something out of obligation but has no pride about doing it. Students complete assignments out of obligation to the teacher or their parents (Ryan & Deci 2017). Identification regulation moves closer to autonomy because it is those behaviors that one feels are important. However, the person has not internalized them to be a part of all facets of life. For instance, one may feel that it is important to uphold certain Christian values, but they do not carry out these beliefs when around a certain group of people (Ryan & Deci 2017). Integration requires that a person uses higher order skills of reflection and transforms his behavior to align to what he truly believes. To test this highest form of internalization, Legault, Green-Demers, Grant, and Chung (2007) assessed participants’ internalization to regulate expression of prejudices. Participants completed a self-report and association tests; those participants of highly autonomous motivation to regulate prejudice exhibited high scores on both self-assessment and association tests.

Another study (Knafo&Assor, 2007) assessed students' perception and attitude toward parents and chores. Students internalized parents' values when they perceived them as being supporting, not controlling. Another study (Williams, Patrick, &Deci 2009) found that when doctors are perceived as autonomy supportive, patients are more likely to accept medical advice and adjust their lifestyle accordingly. Integration regulation is when a person has placed value on an activity, and it becomes part of self (Ryan &Deci 2017). Students begin to regulate their own learning; they experience a sense of self-actualization (Fonseca 2015). Internalization, on the other hand, leads a person to identify with a certain motivational style.

The third theory of SDT is Causality Orientation Theory (COT), and it focuses on the position of self in relation to motivation. In essence, COT looks at a person's perception of his or her environment. Individuals who perceive their environment to be autonomous tend to seek ways to develop their interests, whereas individuals who perceive their environment to be controlled tend to seek external contingencies. Causality orientation is exhibited through behavior regulation. Individuals who perceive environment to be autonomous are more likely to internalize behaviors and therefore sustain positive change. Individuals who perceive environment to threaten autonomy will not reach optimal levels of behavior regulation (Ryan &Deci 2017). Figure 3 shows how one's perception leads to a maintained behavior change in the school setting, an adapted model taken from healthcare.

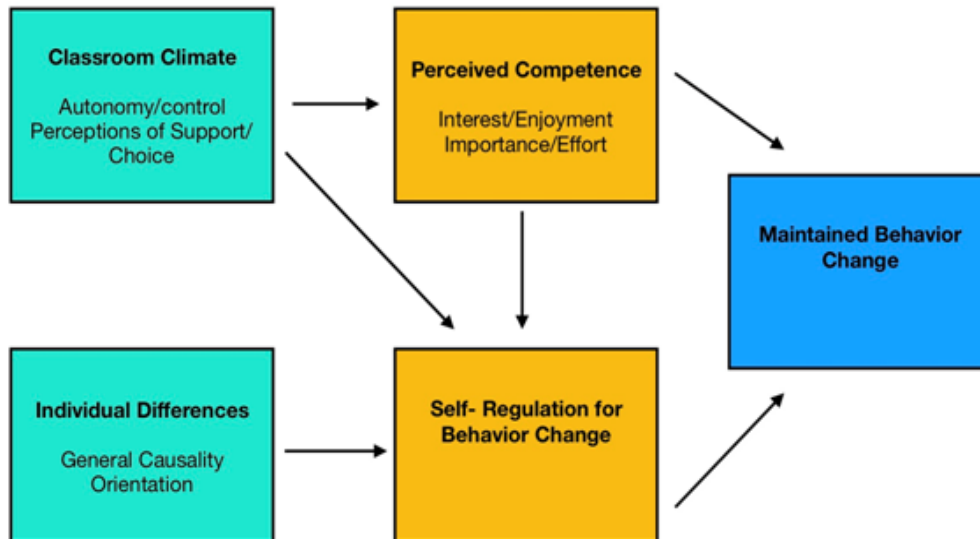


Figure 3. Causality Orientation (Impact of Perception in Classroom Environment)

The following literature review gives an overview of initial studies of COT. One of the first studies (Koestner & Zuckerman 1994) of this theory found that persons of autonomy orientation gravitate toward environments that offer choice and opportunities relevant to personal interests (Ryan & Deci 2017). The same study found that persons of controlled orientation seek external rewards and have low intrinsic motivation. Persons of impersonal orientation gravitated toward obstacles, experienced anxiety and a lack of competence, and were quickly overwhelmed.

In addition to endorsing behavior regulation and causality orientation, SDT also makes the claim that a person's motivational orientation is dependent upon whether or not their needs are being met (Ryan & Deci 2017). Basic Psychological Needs Theory, the fourth mini theory of SDT, focuses on the satisfaction and frustration of SDT's basic psychological needs of competence (desire to feel effective), relatedness (propensity to feel connected to others), and autonomy (desire to have choice and feel self determined) (Van Broeck et al. 2010; Deci & Ryan 2000; Deci et al. 1991). Figure 4 shows what happens when basic need are satisfied.

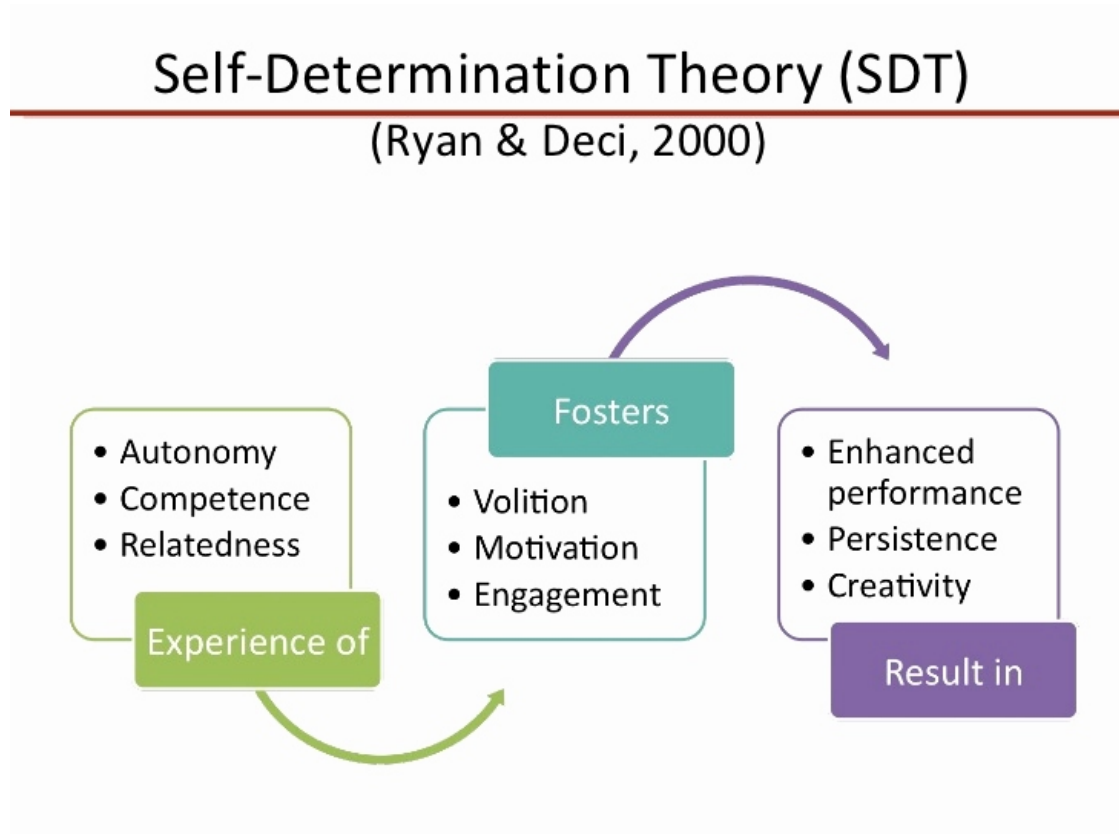


Figure 4. Self-Determination Theory (SDT)



According to SDT, basic needs of competence, relatedness, and autonomy are a source of energy for action and therefore correlate to wellness and motivation (Ryan & Deci 2017). To determine the effect of satisfying the needs of competence, relatedness, and autonomy, researchers (Hardi, Leone, Kasser, & Ryan 1993) studied workers of a shoe factory using the measure of self-esteem and mental health to predict work-related and personal wellness. Though the workers received low pay, workers were rated “well” based on the criteria of self-esteem and psychological health, and researchers attributed these ratings to the workplace climate that satisfied the needs of competence, relatedness, and autonomy. Other studies supported this finding: One study (Nix. Ryan, Manly, & Deci 1999) demonstrated that when participants worked on tasks that were self-directed or autonomously driven, they displayed greater vitality.

Another study of a data processing company found that although the workers felt stressed at times due to the demands of work, measures of self-esteem and mental health measured them as well, and again, workers contributed their wellness to an autonomous work environment (Deci et al. 2001). Other studies (Kasser & Ryan 1999; La; Deci, La Guardia, Moller, Scheiner, & Ryan 2006) of the same findings proved that satisfaction of autonomy leads to more significant subjective vitality, increased energy, and motivation to act. Ryan & Deci (2008) concluded the following: (1) controlled activities deplete one's vitality while autonomous ones enhance it; (2) satisfaction of psychological needs of competence and relatedness leads to autonomy, which in turn improves subjective vitality; and (3) intrinsic motivation increases personal vitality (Ryan & Deci 2017).

Satisfaction of needs leads to healthy intrinsic motivation, which in turn leads a person to choose goals for intrinsic reasons. The fifth theory of Self-Determination Theory is Goal

Contents Theory (GCT), and it seeks to give understanding to the content of goals that an individual pursues (Ryan & Deci 2017). SDT claims that people pursue goals for intrinsic or extrinsic reasons, and the category of motives relates differently to well being (thriving) (Deci & Ryan 2000). Kasser & Ryan (1993) began their work distinguishing between the relation of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation and satisfaction; the researchers created an Aspiration Index (AI) to rate the importance of different aspirations (goals). For this study, the researchers considered intrinsic ambitions of personal growth, relationship, and community involvement relationship to extrinsic motivation of financial success and wealth. The survey indicated that intrinsic motivation related to wellness, and extrinsic motivation yielded lower self-actualization. Kasser and Ryan conducted a second study and found that intrinsic motivation is negatively associated with depression and anxiety. A third study of 18-year-olds of mixed socioeconomic status yielded the same results--intrinsic motivation related to wellness. In 1996, Kasser and Ryan extended the study to include extrinsic motivation of attractiveness and fame as they relate to self-actualization, energy and vitality, narcissism, depression, and common physical symptoms. Participants included urban adults and college students, and the findings were similar to previous studies of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. Participants who valued intrinsic motivation had positive relationships of self-actualization, energy, and vitality.

The final theory of Self-Determination, Relationship Motivation Theory (RMT), ties all aspects of SDT to relationship quality (Ryan & Deci 2017). Relationship Motivation Theory stems from research from Harry Harlow (1958) that used primates to prove the need for a relationship; Spitz (1965) that explored developmental need of infants' need for relationships; and Baumeister and Leary (1995) that explored the need for belonging (Ryan

&Deci2017). Some relationships are merely impersonal transactions, and therefore do not meet the need for relatedness. Relationships can yield adaptive benefits. More importantly to education is the fact that relationships can be intrinsically satisfying. One primary influential relationship is that of the teacher-student because the teacher has the greatest influence on the teaching environment (Grolnick& Ryan 1987). Teachers who promote an autonomy-supportive environment allow students space to decide their own path to learning, and this has a positive effect on students' interests and relevance, leading to higher student engagement, deeper understanding of content, and high levels of retention of knowledge (Hofferber, Eckes, & Wilde 2014). In her Ted talk about being a champion for students, educator Rita Pierson (2014) sums up the importance of relationship using a thought-provoking quote by Dr. James Comer, Professor of Child Psychiatry from Yale: "No significant learning can occur without a significant relationship." This quote sums up the idea behind SDT's relationship theory.

### **Classroom Climate that Promotes SDT**

In his book, *Engaging Adolescents in Reading* (2008), Guthrie promotes reading engagement through autonomy supportive classrooms. Figure 5, a visual description of the engaged reader (Guthrie & Wigfield 2002), shows the undeniable similarities between the characteristics of the engaged reader and the components of SDT.

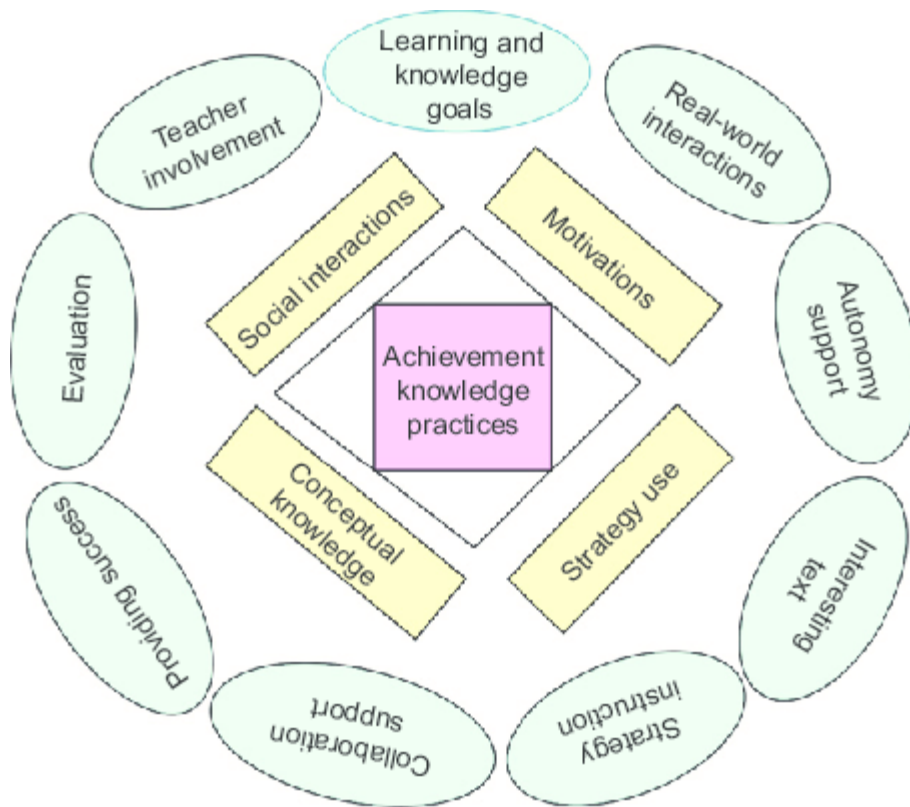


Figure 5. Visual Description of the Engaged Reader (Guthrie & Wigfield 2002).

The visual supports all six theories of SDT in some way. The outer shell gives an idea of what structures are needed in the classroom to support innate tendencies of students, and the middle shell demonstrates what teachers must be mindful of in order to promote the structures of an autonomy supportive classroom. At the core of the shell is the outcome of achievement and knowledge for students and effective practices for teachers.

The remainder of the literature review will focus on practical ways for supporting intrinsic motivation or extrinsic internalization in the classroom. First, Guthrie begins with the idea of goal setting. As a practical guide to teachers, Guthrie (2008) explains the following about mastery goals: (1) Mastery goals should not be isolated goals but must be embedded into the big picture of the overall purpose of a lesson; and (2) Mastery goals must be relevant--linked to students' prior experience in some way. Similar to founders of SDT, Guthrie promotes the belief that mastery goals lead to intrinsic motivation more quickly than performance goals do. Guthrie (2008) cites Nicholas, Jones, and Hancock (2003), a study about teachers who promoted performance goals. The findings showed high levels of disengagement. Mastery helps students deepen their understanding of complex knowledge (McRae & Guthrie 2009), and once knowledge is deepened, students have the ability to expand upon it if they so choose.

Secondly, Guthrie makes the claim that choice promotes self-regulated learning. Citing Ryan and Deci (2000), Guthrie explains that to internalize learning, students need to be able to take charge of their learning environment. Citing Assor, Kaplan, & Roth (2002) and Reeve & Jang (2006), Guthrie lists the following practices that promote self-regulated learning: Teachers making lessons relevant, allowing students to voice their opinions, and helping students find their path to learning are practices that promote autonomy that leads to self-regulated learning.

Guthrie gives the following practices that teachers could use to cultivate intrinsic motivation that leads to self-regulated learning: (1) Ownership (2) Input (3) Options (4) Self Selection (5) Inquiry. In *Best Practices in Adolescent Literacy Instruction*, Rush and Reynolds explain that students become persistent with reading when they can connect with it in some aspect (Hinchman& Sheridan-Thomas 2014). Repeated experiences of reading something they find enjoyable increase intrinsic motivation for reading (Rush & Reynolds in Hinchman& Sheridan-Thomas 2014).

Next, Guthrie makes the claim that reading is social, and the need for relationships is paramount to learning; this belief is congruent with the interpersonal aspect of SDT. Guthrie gives six instructional practices for involving the social aspect of learning: (1) Open discussion (2) Student led discussion groups (3) Collaborative Reasoning (4) Partnerships (5) Socially Constructing Management and (6) Scaffolding Social Motivation. Creating opportunities will improve students' desire to read (McRae & Guthrie 2009).

Last but not least, Guthrie makes clear the importance of students' feeling competent. He provides the following practices for building confidence: (1) Recognize the gap between students and text; (2) Establish initial confidence; and (3) Assure enabling skills. Feedback is essential, but it must be done in a way that fosters autonomy. Repeated failure with reading undermines intrinsic motivation for doing so (Rush & Reynolds in Hinchman& Sheridan-Thomas 2014). Thus, students refuse to engage in the very activity that leads to success.

## **Criticism**

Over the course of 40 years, psychologists Edward Deci and Richard Ryan and their colleagues expanded CET to include five other theories. Their first published handbook gives an overview of the 17 universities that were involved in researching SDT in various domains (Deci& Ryan 2002), followed by a second published handbook that shows the growth of the body of research (Deci& Ryan 2017). Researchers of SDT have applied the theory to various domains; researchers have gotten similar or exact results. However, the body of research has not been exempt from criticism.

Prior to Deci and Ryan's SDT theory, most motivation theories excluded internal factors (Deci& Ryan 1994). Many behaviorists were of the belief that nothing existed between motivated and unmotivated behavior (Deci& Ryan 2017). Deci and Ryan's SDT theory challenged behaviorists to explore what they could not see. Deci and Ryan argued that a continuum from amotivation to motivation did exist. Figure 6 shows the continuum (Ryan &Deci 2000).

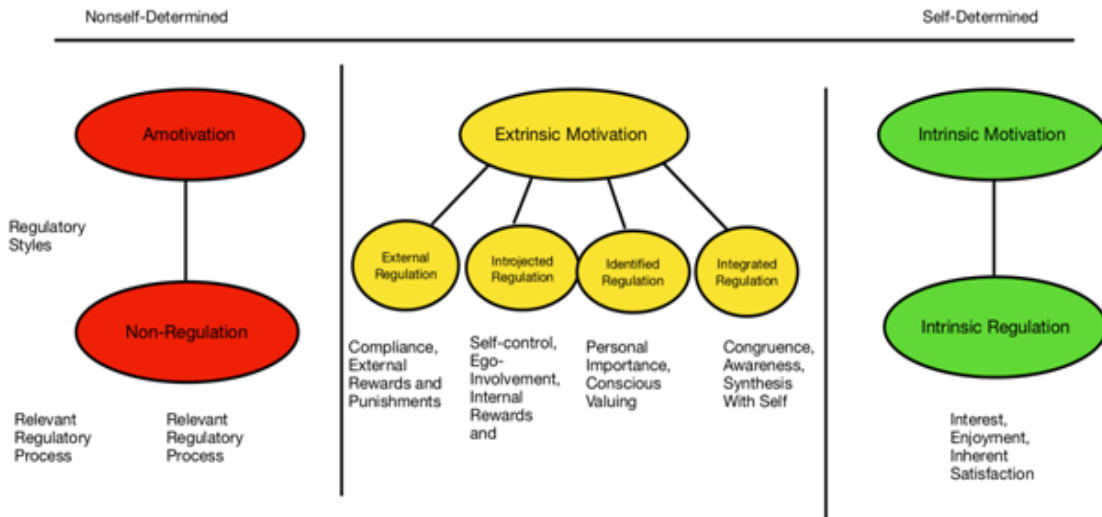


Figure 6.Motivation Continuum (Ryan and Deci 2000).



Adding more criticism to SDT, Bandura's work about self-efficacy and motivation was published a few years before Deci and Ryan's work of CET, and Bandura's supporters opposed Deci and Ryan's belief that something more than self-efficacy impacts motivation (Ryan & Deci 2002). Another source of criticism came from the negativity associated with the undermining impact of extrinsic rewards on intrinsic motivation (Catania 2013). The critics believed that extrinsic rewards must be used to motivate students initially, yet research of SDT made the claim that when a person uses external rewards in excess, the rewards will become expected and this would undermine intrinsic motivation; individuals would work only for the reward (Ross 1975). This led other critics to question the idea that extrinsic motivation could undermine intrinsic motivation. Critics Cameron and Pierce (1994, 1996) conducted a meta-analysis of 96 experimental studies and found that "overall" rewards do not decrease intrinsic motivation because verbal praise can increase intrinsic motivation. They found that only when a person expects the rewards does it negatively impact intrinsic motivation. Eisenberg, Pierce, and Cameron (1999) conducted another meta-analysis, and findings were consistent with findings of Cameron and Pierce.

Self-Determination proposes supporting autonomy( an inner endorsement of personal intention) (Reeve & Jang 2006), and this idea is often met with resistance and criticism because the concept is not easily understood, the autonomous environment is difficult to create, and teacher styles are contrary to the ideas of an autonomous learning environment(Reeve & Jang 2006; Reeve, Jang, Hulusic 2016). Defining the autonomous environment depends on the body of research to which one is referring. For instance, if one uses the learner autonomy model and research of Betts and Kercher (1999), he will understand the autonomous environment to be one

that fosters five dimensions: (1) Orientation (2) Individual Development (3) Enrichment (4) Seminars and (5) In-Depth Study. Teachers facilitate learners through the five dimensions in an effort to foster authentic learning. However, if one uses autonomy supportive described in SDT, the focus would be on allowing a student to act on his or her personal intention (Reeve & Jang 2006).

No matter the definition or model of autonomy used, the autonomous model is criticized for the difficulty of implementation. Fortunately, researchers have found that certain elements are consistent in any autonomous supportive classroom: the amount of time teachers listen, offer encouragement, provide rationales for assignments, allow students time to use their preferred way of learning, allow students time to communicate, and communicate a perspective taking command (Reeve & Jang 2006, Reeve 2016). Last but not least, one's personal style does matter. Research has found that teachers who have a more controlling personality style are more likely to exert that same style when teaching (Reeve 2009); (Reeve, Jang, &Halusic 2016).

### **Summary**

Overall, empirical studies have advanced researchers' understanding of intrinsic motivation across periods of development and different domains, and SDT has remained well supported (Ryan &Deci 2017). From an educational perspective, empirical work supports the idea that autonomously motivated students thrive in educational settings (Reeve 2002; Deci& Ryan 2002). Research has shown many positive outcomes associated with strengthened intrinsic motivation (Ryan &Deci 2000, Deci& Ryan 1991, and Ryan, Deci, &Grolnick 1995, Fonseca 2015), and though ideal, these outcomes cannot be maintained all day (Brophy 1998). John T.

Guthrie gives practical ways of fostering engagement that is autonomous. Application of SDT in a high school tested area English classroom would be useful in providing insight about instructional practices that promote or hinder reading motivation for those students who already have the ability to read as well as insight about the impact the demand of state assessments have on the teacher's choice to build autonomous supports.

### **CHAPTER III: METHODOLOGY**

Methodology of case studies typically provides descriptions of the participants of the study and description of the setting if the case study includes a location. The procedure and data analysis for the study is typically narrative in nature, and the narrative usually includes description of how the data was reduced, displayed, and verified. This study explores two classrooms within two school districts, and the chapter describes the setting, participants, procedure, and data analysis of the study.

#### **Setting**

The study involved two high schools located in a southern state in Southeastern United States. Convenience sampling was used to select the schools. The schools were chosen because: (A) they had similar school profiles (population size, demographics, and accountability rating), (B) the schools are located within twelve miles of each other, minimizing differences across schools (i.e., geographical location, resources, socio economic status), (C) they have tenth grade English classes involved in high stakes testing, (D) they have tenth grade English teachers with more than five years of teaching experience, (E) they have superintendents with less than five years of experience, and (F) they represented a convenient sample for the researcher to access. School A, located in the city limits, is made up of two elementary schools (PK-5), one middle school (6-8), and one high school (9-12). The total student population is 1,368.

School B, part of a rural school district, is made up of one primary school (K-3), one upper elementary (4-8), one junior high school (7-8), and one high school (9-12). The total student population is 1,329. For this study, the researcher chose to pull a sample of four students and one teacher from School A's and School B's tenth grade population, making a total sample of eight students and two teachers. School A has a tenth grade population of 111 students with the breakdown shown in Figure 7. School B has a tenth grade population of 98 students with the breakdown shown in Figure 8.

## School A Tenth Grade Population

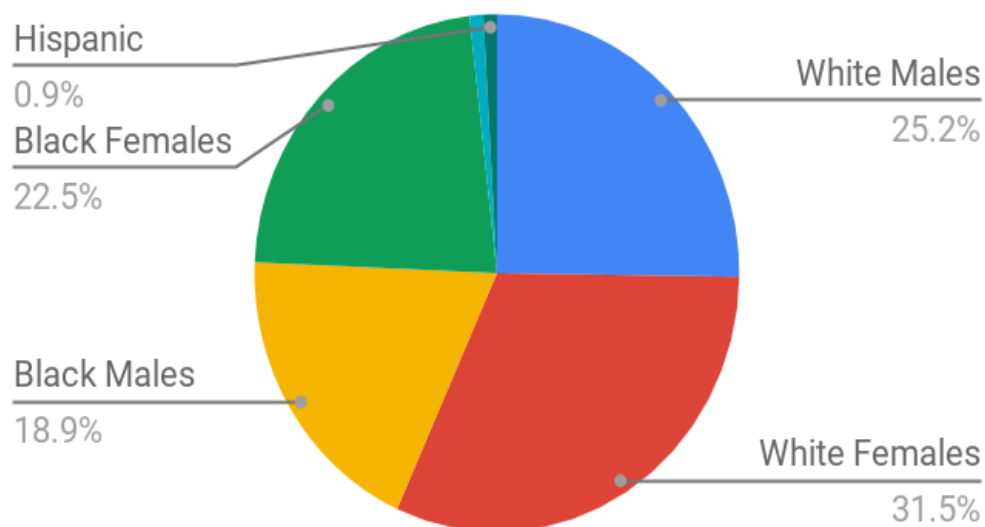


Figure 7. Tenth Grade Population School A.

## School B Tenth Grade Population

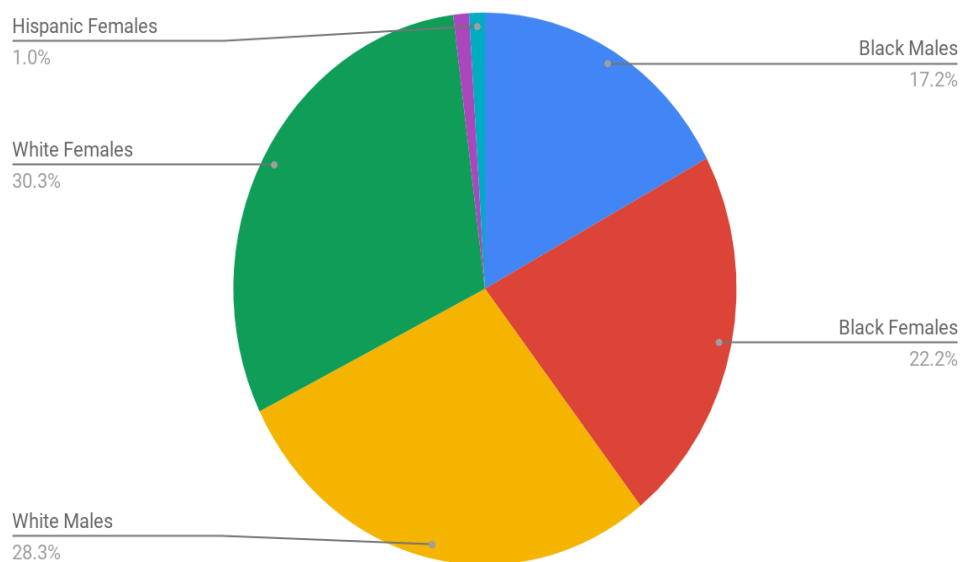


Figure 8. Tenth Grade Population School B.

School A is located within in the city limits of a town with total population of 6,958. Seventy-seven percent of the population has obtained a high school diploma, and approximately, 21% of the population is at the poverty level (United States Census Bureau 2017). School B is a rural town with a total population of 1,942 citizens. Approximately 69% of the population has obtained a high school diploma and 25.7% of the population meet the poverty criteria. Though School A is within the city limits and School B is within a rural location,, their student population is similar in ethnicity and academic accountability ratings. Both schools have a majority of Caucasian students with School A having 56% and School B having 58%; females are the dominant gender; and both schools earned a B accountability rating from the Mississippi Department of Education with School A having higher percentages for students' proficiency. Differences between the schools exist in the form of student-teacher ratio and teacher experience. For example, School A's student-teacher ratio is 22:1, while School B's student teacher ratio is 16:1.

## **Participants**

### **Teachers**

The tenth grade English teacher from each school participated in the study. Teachers were selected because their class was involved in high stakes testing. Teacher A earned an alternate route teaching endorsement and began teaching high school English eight years ago. Teacher B earned traditional route teaching endorsement, and she began teaching middle school English nineteen years ago. However, this is Teacher B's first year to teach high school English.

## **Students**

The students in the study were selected because they scored within the proficient range of their eighth grade MS Academic Achievement Performance (MAAP) for English Language Arts and they turned in consent forms before the deadline. Mississippi Academic Assessment Program (MAAP) scores are broken into five performance levels (PL) based on scale score (SS) ranges. PL1, the lowest performance level, has an SS of 841 or below. PL2 follows with a SS range of 842-849. Both PL1 and PL2 are considered minimal, not passing. PL3 has a SS range of 850-864, and this range is considered basic, meaning that the student made the cut score to pass. PL4 has a SS range of 865-879, and this range indicates proficiency, meaning that the student demonstrated mastery of at least half of the assessment. Performance Level (PL) 5 SS range is 880 and above, and this range indicates that the student has demonstrated mastery of more than 50% of the tested standards, placing the student in advance placement. All participants scored within the PL4 range, high proficiency; however, School A participants' scores were slightly higher overall. Table 1 shows the participants' scores.



*Table 1*  
*Participants Scale Score on 8th Grade State Assessment1*

School A	8th Grade MAAP Score	School B	8th Grade MAAP Score
Student One	875	Student One	866
Student Two	874	Student Two	875
Student Three	877	Student Three	871
Student Four	879	Student Four	873

The School A participants identified as two males and two females, three white, non-Hispanic and one African American. The School B participants identified as one male and three females, three white, non-Hispanic and one African American. Six of the eight students were fifteen years old; the remaining two students were sixteen. The majority of the students participated in extracurricular activities and/or clubs (See Table 2).

*Table 2*  
*Extracurricular Student Participation2*

School A	Extracurricular Participation	School B	Extracurricular Participation
Student One	Football	Student One	Basketball and Softball
Student Two	Football and Band	Student Two	Teen Spokesperson for the State
Student Three	Poetry Club	Student Three	Football
Student Four	NO Participation	Student Four	Soccer

## **PROCEDURE**

After receiving approval for the prospectus and for IRB, the researcher requested permission from the school districts by the letter (See Appendix A). Both superintendents requested more information, so the researcher met one school superintendent face to face and discussed details of the study with the other school superintendent over the phone. After receiving the superintendents' approval, the researcher sent invitation letters (Appendix B) to the two teachers. Both teachers requested a meeting to discuss required obligations of the study. The researcher met with Teacher B in her classroom and discussed the study's purpose and obligations. At the end of the meeting, Teacher B agreed to participate in the study. The researcher met with Teacher A at a local coffee shop and discussed the purpose and obligations of the study. At the end of the meeting, Teacher A agreed to participate in the study.

The following week, the researcher met with each teacher at their school to discuss the sample for the study. Prior to meeting with the researcher, Teacher A dissected her MAAP data and class rosters and shared the information with the researcher. The teacher's second and sixth period classes had the majority of students who were identified as proficient readers, so the teacher arranged for the researcher to meet with both classes to inform students about the research project and send invitation letters and consent form located in Appendix B and Appendix C home to parents.

Teacher B did not have a printed copy of her students' eighth grade assessment scores, but she gave the researcher permission to request the information from the district's test coordinator. After receiving the scores from the coordinator, the researcher dissected the data on her own. After highlighting students who scored within the proficiency range of their eighth

grade MAAP, the researcher looked at Teacher B's class rosters to determine which classes had the majority of students identified as proficient readers. The teacher's first and fifth period classes had the majority of the students. The teacher arranged for the researcher to meet with students to share the purpose of the study and to send invitation letters and consent forms home to parents (See Appendices B and C).

Students were given seven days to return consent forms. After seven days, both teachers gave the returned consent forms to the researcher. Teacher A returned seven consent forms, but one consent form had a note attached to it requesting that the researcher contact the student's grandmother before proceeding. The researcher made three attempts to contact the student's grandmother and address any questions the grandmother had concerning the study, all attempts to contact the grandmother were unsuccessful.

To determine which students would become the sample from the other six returned consent forms, the researcher assigned numbers to each complete consent form and put those numbers in a box to be drawn. A student who was not part of the study drew four numbers to represent the four students who would make up the sample.

Teacher B returned five consent forms. While going through the consent forms, the researcher noticed that one of the five returned forms was not signed. Therefore, the researcher used the four students as a sample for School B.

Before conducting the study, the researcher shared the interview questions with a panel of specialists on the pedagogy and topic of reading for feedback about intended purpose, relevance of interview questions to research question, and grammar and mechanics. Credentials of each specialist are included in Appendix D. As an added measure, after the committee

approved questions, the researcher shared interview questions with one class of eleventh grade students who were not part of the study to get feedback about the clarity of questions.

Data for the study was collected from 50-minute interviews (Table 3) for student participants, and six 50-minute classroom observations. The interviews were semi-structured because this type of question guides research but also allows participants the opportunity to provide new meaning to a study (Galletta 2013). Interviews took place during the school day in a quiet space during one of the student's extracurricular or elective classes. Table 3 shows the interview questions that were designed for each sub-question of the research question.

*Table 3*  
*Research Questions and Interview Questions*

Research Question	Data Collected	Data Needed
Central Question: How do students who are proficient readers describe their experiences in school?	Semi-Structured Interview	ALL Interview Questions
Subquestion: What do proficient readers identify as having an impact on their school experience-- instruction, classroom climate, reading motivation?	Semi-Structured Interview	<p>How do you view yourself as a reader/ reading teacher?</p> <p>Describe your experience in your English class.</p> <p>Do you think there are supports in place to help you/your students improve reading motivation? Do you like to read/to teach reading?</p> <p>What is your favorite thing to read or teach?</p> <p>Tell me about your experience with reading assignments in English.</p>
Subquestion: What do students who are proficient perceive to be their biggest challenge in school?	Semi-Structured Interview	<p>When you are given or have to prepare a reading assignment, what is most difficult?</p> <p>What kind of assignments do you struggle with the most?</p>
Subquestion: What do students who	Semi-Structured	With what kind of reading

are proficient readers perceive to help them be successful in school?	Interview	<p>assignment do you have the most success?</p> <p>What contributes to your or your students' success in reading?</p> <p>What keeps you (your students) motivated to keep reading?</p>
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In addition to conducting interviews, the researcher conducted a total of six classroom observations per school. The researcher conducted the first announced observation after interviewing students. This first observation allowed the students and teachers the opportunity to get adjusted to the idea of being observed, and the other five observations gave the researcher a higher chance of capturing the natural occurrences that take place in the classroom environment. To remain consistent during each observation, the researcher created an observation tool of motivational elements according to SDT; Table 4 shows the observation tool.

Table 4  
Observation Tool4

Components of SDT	Observable Evidence
Cognitive Evaluation Theory (CET)  Goal Content Theory (SDT)	Intrinsic Stimulation vs Extrinsic Stimulation  Student Centered vs Teacher Centered  Mastery Goals vs Performance Goals
Basic Psychological Needs (SDT)  Organismic Integration Theory (SDT)	(1) Ownership (2) Input (3) Options (4) Self Selection (5) Inquiry
Causality Orientation Theory (SDT)  Relationship Motivation Theory (SDT)	(1) Open discussion (2) Student-led discussion groups (3) Collaborative Reasoning (4) Partnerships (5) Socially Constructing Management (6) Scaffolding Social Motivation

## **Data Analysis**

After the final classroom observation, interviews and classroom observations were read and re-read. First, interview questions were divided by the 12 interviews questions that were designed to provide answers for each sub-question. Then, 12 interview questions were separated according to distinct comparisons and contrasts, and this separation narrowed the questions down to four. Next, the researcher notated patterns based on similarities and differences. Finally, the researcher condensed and expanded patterns emerging around the similarities and differences of students' responses, adding and/ or confirming themes according to their relevance to the research question. Field notes for each school observation were organized in chronological order and split according to School A and School B, and the field notes were used to verify claims made in interview responses, providing validation for the central data points of the study.

## **CHAPTER IV: RESULTS**

Results for a case study are usually given in themes. This study is typical in that results are given in the themes, but before exploring those themes, the researcher would like to explain the process of identifying those relevant, consistent themes. Therefore, after describing both schools and their participants, the following chapter explores the data reduction before describing each theme.

### **School A**

School A is a B-rated school according to MS Accountability System, and this accountability is based on the school's district's ability to maintain high proficiency percentages for state assessments given in grades 3-8 and 9-11. Though the school is a B-rated district, the school is under "school improvement" for its inability of maintaining and sustaining growth for particular subgroups of students. The superintendent of the district has less than five years of experience in his current position. He promotes collaboration among district level administration, building level administration, and teachers to create and implement curriculum that the team feels is vital to students' success. Though the principal has been principal for School District A for only three years, she has more than fifteen years of experience

. Teacher A has been in the school district for eight years, and not only has she consistently demonstrated her ability to lead students to proficiency scores on the English II state assessment but also she has consistently demonstrated her ability to maintain and sustain growth for all students.

On average, Teacher A teaches from 105 to 115 students per year, and less than five students fail the English II assessment each year. She dispels the myth that teaching to the test causes students to have limited knowledge beyond test taking. She says, “I have to keep my students’ future in mind. If they fail that state test, they don’t graduate. Teaching to the test ensures that I equip them with tools they need to pass that test.” The teacher does not work in isolation; she and the other tenth grade teachers of other disciplines meet weekly to discuss ways to expose students to “power standards” on a regular basis. She explained, “The history teacher uses the same rubric and strategies that I use for research and writing. A lot of times students come to my class with prior knowledge because of their exposure to historical accounts of topics that we explore in English.”

When it comes to classroom instruction, Teacher A builds thematic unions that include reading, writing, and speaking. Each day, she begins class with a bell ringer, a short test prep assignment, before tackling the true purpose of the lesson which is to get students reading, writing, and speaking. Teacher A introduces lessons with enthusiastic renditions of characters or with her ability to help students make personal connections. Then, she gives reading assignments and allows students think time. Students skim the reading assignments and jot down things they notice about the structure and vocabulary of the passage. Then, she reviews an instructional strategy that is appropriate to the lesson before encouraging students to explore

reading through peer discussions. Some days students work in pairs to dissect a reading selection, and other days, they work in groups of four to discuss comprehension questions for a reading selection. Teacher A allows students to explore while challenging their thought process as she travels from one group to the next listening to their conversations.

Students understand the routine because they enter the class with the mission of getting started right away as if to say they are getting the test prep part of the lesson out of the way so that they can move on to the heart of the lesson. Students are not restricted to a certain seating arrangements because they change according to their lesson of the day. During peer interaction, students encourage each other, question each other, and/or challenge each other. Students do not seem offended when their thoughts are challenged because they seem to understand that the goal is to question all avenues in an attempt to arrive at an answer that the entire group can accept.

Time passes quickly in the class because students almost never finish an assignment, and even if they do finish, they review, revise, and refine it the next day. Class does not end with the bell, because students have outside enrichment assignments that they have an opportunity to complete to demonstrate vocabulary mastery. Occasionally, students would ask the teacher's opinion about an enrichment activity that they completed. Some students, those who missed class more than one day and those who failed assignments, attended tutoring after school as a way of getting caught up. Though the classroom is one involved in a state assessment at the end of the year, students do not talk about the test. Instead, they talk about the reading and writing strategies that they use to dissect reading passages into digestible, understandable parts.

## **School B**

School B has an academic accountability rating of B, and this rating is due to the district's ability to consistently maintain and sustain growth of all students. Proficiency percentages for this school are below average, but their maintenance of growth of all subgroups of students makes up for the low proficiency. The superintendent of this school is similar to School A's superintendent in that he has less than five years of experience in his current position. A striking difference between School A's superintendent is that School B's superintendent promotes curriculum from a top down stance. For example, district level and building level administration meet and discuss academic goals for the district, and they share these goals with the teachers who implement them. The district does not have a curriculum team of administrators and teachers. The building level principal is new to the district but not to education or the role of principal. His experience of more than 15 years makes him a seasoned administrator. Other than require teachers to participate in professional learning communities where teachers read about best practices and discuss them, teachers work independently. Many times, the reading about best practices focus on improving assessment scores and not necessarily on improving reading instruction. Semester assessments online assessments are given to students, and administration review those results and make adjustments to curriculum goals as needed. Building level administration relay this information to teachers, and teachers adjust their lessons as they are instructed to do.

Teacher B is new to the district, and this is her first year to teach high school English. Because of her superior assessment ratings for middle school language arts, the district felt the English II placement was the best placement. Teacher B works independently to

navigate appropriate lessons for students, and she navigates this based off her previous experiences with middle school students. Her lessons are very structured, and the end result is a graded assignment. Though classroom desks are in groups of four, students are rarely given the opportunity to have peer discussions. Teacher B teaches whole group with guided questions, modeling, and then assigning. The students of this class enter the classroom with the understanding that they should complete a bell ringer. This bell ringer varies from day to day. Sometimes, the bell ringer is a test prep activity in which students read a passage and answer questions; other times, the bell ringer is latin or greek roots to words to build vocabulary. Sometimes students go over the bell ringer as a whole group, and sometimes they turn it in to the teacher. Teacher B usually begins her lessons with a video to spark students' interests, and then she explains the assignment that is due at the end of the period before modeling her expectation. For the most part, the classroom environment is quiet. Students work to complete assignments, and usually they are done with these assignments before the bell rings to dismiss class. The teacher explained, "Students are very unmotivated by the assignments we read." She was upset by their performance on their semester assessments explaining, "They did not try." Though a clear distinction existed between both schools and teachers, the researcher knew that this was only the surface. To get to the underlying story, the researcher began the quest of unpacking the data.

### **Data Reduction**

Data reduction began subconsciously with the creation of interview questions. Because each question was designed to answer the central question of how teachers balance reading



motivation in a classroom that is involved in high stakes testing, the researcher was certain that particular questions would reveal an answer. The 12 interview questions examined both the academic and motivational aspect of reading, and of those 12, only four questions yielded responses that were data rich, meaning that the responses could be dissected into several avenues.

Additionally, four interview questions revealed consistent, relevant data, leading the researcher to possible themes of the study. Question one, for example, examined students' perception of their reading, and the researcher found students from School A and School B rated their reading self-concept as high; however, School A rated their reading in terms of growth whereas students from School B rated themselves as good or strong readers with no indication that they needed to do more to become stronger or better readers. Though data would need further dissection to explore reasons for the inconsistency in their description, the current data revealed that all readers had a positive self-concept of reading. As a result, self-concept of reading became a contender for theme one.

Another interview question linked students' self-concept of reading to their reading instruction. The question asked readers to describe their reading assignments, and responses revealed that students from School A read, reread, and wrote about about reading selections, but students from School B read a wide variety of reading assignments. This comparison leads the researcher to a possibility for theme two: Deep versus wide reading. A third interview question demonstrated a logical flow from instruction to the provider of the instruction, the teacher. The question was one that examined teachers' roles in motivating students to read. Students' answers revealed that one teacher used relevance while the other relied on external factors to promote

reading motivation. Another striking contrast lead the researcher to pin this as a possible theme of interest and relevance. The final question which questioned student's ability to remain motivated despite reading difficulty or lack of interest lead to yet another contrast: Students from School A reported "have to" coupled with internal reasons for their continued motivation while students from School B reported external factors such as grades and a passing score on the state assessment.

This contrast became a basis for a possible fourth theme of mindset. Table 5 shows the interview questions, student responses from each school, and comparison result that was the basis for mental themes that researcher had created.

Table 5  
Data Display of Students' Perception of Self as Readers<sup>5</sup>

Interview Questions	Student Response	Comparison Result
How do you view yourself as a reader?	<p><b>School A</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I think I am getting better</li> <li>• One thing that would set me back a little bit is having words I don't understand</li> <li>• I think as long as it's interesting and something that I find as a good topic, I'm all about reading</li> <li>• I think I could be a better reader overall</li> </ul> <p><b>School B</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I view myself as a good reader</li> <li>• I consider myself a strong reader</li> <li>• I think I'm pretty good</li> <li>• I think I'm pretty good at it</li> </ul>	<p>Students from School A rated themselves in terms of getting better</p> <p>Students from School B viewed themselves as good or strong readers.</p>
Describe the different kind of reading assignments you are asked to complete in English class.	<p><b>School A</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We do a lot of read the story...doing questions...going back reading it</li> <li>• Right now, we're reading <i>Night</i> by Elie Wiesel</li> <li>• We're mostly focusing on different types of essays</li> <li>• We read...right now, we're reading <i>Night</i></li> </ul> <p><b>School B</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We read <i>Frankenstein</i>, and an excerpt from Henrietta Lax...it was really long and you had to read between the lines to get what the author</li> </ul>	<p>School A seems to read the same story for a long length of time, going back to the the story for some reason and include writing at some point in instruction.</p> <p>School B seems to read multiple modes of literature (novels, excerpts, and workbooks).</p>

	<p>was trying to do</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• My teacher does what the school assigns</li> <li>• Usually we just read and answer questions about the story</li> <li>• Workbooks; we do a bunch of focus questions and some think questions and then we test</li> <li>•</li> </ul>	
Describe what your teacher does to motivate you to read.	<p><b>School A</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• She breaks it down with the notes and then she like...she relates it back to our own experiences</li> <li>• She kinda puts her own twist on it</li> <li>• She gets on the board and she draws stick figures and write character traits</li> <li>• She tries to give us passages that could help us relate to them...like we had a passage about cars and how they are going to be in the future...</li> </ul> <p><b>School B</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• She plays videos to gain our attention</li> <li>• I mean we never really talk about the fact that this is boring</li> <li>• She puts us in groups</li> <li>• She emphasizes our grades and emphasizes how important the state test is to</li> </ul>	<p>Most students from School A report that their teacher finds ways to make reading topics relatable to them.</p> <p>Students from School B do not report ways that their teacher makes reading relevant or relatable to them. Instead, they report that she plays an introductory video, emphasize</p>

	graduation	grades, puts them in groups, or seems oblivious to the fact that reading assignments are boring.
What keeps you motivated to keep reading when an assignment is not particularly interesting or easy?	<p><b>School A</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The idea that you <b>have to</b> do it if you want results</li> <li>• I <b>have to</b> meet certain standards</li> <li>• I <b>have to</b> get the job done</li> <li>• To get done...to the finish line ultimately</li> </ul> <p><b>School B</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I think about the state test that I have take</li> <li>• I want to make all A's and of course pass the state test</li> <li>• I don't wanna fail</li> <li>• NO RESPONSE</li> </ul>	<p>Students from School A used the phrase "have to", and this implies a higher level of motivation.</p> <p>Students from School B reported state assessments or grades as contributing factors for their motivation, and this implies that they are more externally motivated.</p>

With solid comparisons and contrasts between teacher classrooms, the rationale for the creation of themes would have been justified. However, the researcher felt that she had only scratched the surface of the authentic story; the data would unfold eventually. As a result, she reviewed the data again with the hope of linking possible themes to student's intrinsic or extrinsic motivation. Thinking of motivation in terms of Self-Determination Theory, the researcher questioned the underlying reasons why one set of students spoke of their reading self-concept in terms of growth and the other spoke of their self-efficacy in terms of performance, why one set of students describe reading assignments in terms of deep reading instead of wide reading, why one group of students perceived their teacher's role as motivator as positive, and why one group of students described the motivation persistence in terms of a growth mindset.

As a result, the researcher returned to the data a second time in search of a connection between students' responses for reading self-concept, reading instruction, reading interests and relevance, and reading mindset and rearranged data into an explanatory data display. This time, the researcher examined each of the four interview question responses from the stance of why. Fortunately, students' explanatory responses solidified the idea that reading self-concept, reading instruction, reading interests and relevance, and reading mindset in fact could be described in terms of motivation. Each response and explanation related to the students' or teachers' goal content, intent, reason for engaging in a particular activity. As a result, the researcher was able to make a stronger case for identified themes of self-concept of reading, reading instruction, reading instructional needs, and reading mindset. The themes listed below are accompanied by the explanatory data display that shows the connection between interview questions, student responses, and student motivation.

## THEMES

### **Self-Concept of Reading: “Good Readers” Perform**

The first theme, Self-Concept of Reading, indicates that students describe “good readers” as a reader who performs well and their classroom experiences either validate or dispel their idea of “good readers”. Participants from both schools defined “good readers” as those readers who perform well academically. Initially, students of School A provided ways in which they could improve as readers, but their explanations of why they perceived themselves as they did revealed that they associated “good readers” with being on grade level, being able to easily understand texts given in class, and/or being called on to read in class often. In comparison, students from School B defined “good readers” in the same manner, using performances such as “comprehending the text, understanding the text, and pronouncing words correctly. Table 6 displays data in terms of self-concept theme.

Classroom observations did not validate interview findings as the researcher did not notate any exchanges among students about their definition of “good readers.” However, students from both School A and School B worked hard to complete assignments and receive high marks, upholding the idea that “good readers” perform well. Students from School A often completed extra credit assignments and enrichment assignments to maintain grades. Students asked questions about their progress often as a way of keeping track of their performance. Students from School B completed assignments in an attempt get an acceptable grade, but students did not have opportunities to complete extra credit and enrichment assignments for reading. Their extra credit was earned from students complying with classroom rules about cell phone storage. Students became visible frustrated when they did not make a certain grade.

*Table 6*  
*Data Display of Students' Perception of Self as Readers*

School	Participant	Student Perception	Explanation (Why)	Classroom Instruction Impact
A	1	I think I am getting better	As far as stuff around my grade level now, I'm pretty sure I'm able to understand it	Performance  Ability to Read on grade level
A	2	One thing that would set me back a little bit is having words I don't understand	I'm more of a literal type person , so if it's something that is very literal I'm able to understand it easily	Performance--  Ability to demonstrate understanding of text easily
A	3	I think as long as it's interesting and something that I find as a good topic, I'm all about reading	Last year, when I was in my ninth grade English class, she always wanted me to read for her	Performance--  She always wanted me to read for her
A	4	I think I could be a better reader overall	I never can find anything I want to read  It's just hard for me to find a good book	Lack of Interest



B	1	I view myself as a good reader	I read at my own pace. Like if the text is hard, I am going to read slow and try to comprehend the text.	Performance  Ability to demonstrate comprehension of difficult text
B	2	I consider myself a strong reader	I don't read fast, but I really understand what I'm reading	Performance- Ability to Comprehend Texts
B	3	I think I'm pretty good	I can pronounce words	Performance  Ability to Pronounce Words Correctly
B	4	I think I'm pretty good at it	But sometimes I get bored, and a lot of time when I'm bored, I don't focus in, and I have to re-read a couple of times.	Lack of Interest

### **Reading Instruction: Deep or Wide Reading**

he second theme, Deep or Wide Reading, indicates that students describe their classroom instruction in terms of layers, wide or deep, and classroom instruction promotes one or the other layer. The students from school A described their classroom assignments as deep reading. Students explained that they re-read assignments to answer questions, completed note-taking strategies while reading, wrote essays about texts they read in class, and responded to analytical questions about literary elements. One student from school A explained, “We do a lot of read the story...doing questions..going back reading it. My teacher is very particular about her notes....she says you gotta take notes and we’re always like AWWW we don’t want to but it really helps.” Students from School B, in contrast, described reading assignments by responding with a list of assignments or a week’s span of classroom assignments. Students had a difficult time providing in-depth descriptions of their reading assignments. As a matter of fact, ½ of the students did not elaborate at all and the two students who did elaborate did so by restating a list of assignments. School B students did not report evidence of deep reading as did School A. Table 7 displays the data for reading instruction.

Classroom observations validated findings for both schools. Students from School A completed Socratic Questioning Activities to gain a deeper understanding of texts. They collaborated in groups to come to a consensus about reading selections. They defended chosen reading assignments in the form of debates. Students from School B had whole group discussions about reading assignments, but one or two students typically dominated the discussions. Though students sat in groups as their seating arrangement, they rarely collaborated as a group to gain deeper understandings for the texts they read.

Table 7

*Data Display of Students' Perception of Classroom Assignments*

School	Participant	Response	Explanation (Why)	Classroom Instruction (Impact)
A	1	We do a lot of read the story...doing questions...going back reading it	My teacher is very particular about her notes...she says you gotta take notes and we're always like AWW we don't want to but it really does help	Mastery Strategy-Note Taking
A	2	Right now, we're reading Night by Elie Wiesel	We have to read and practice note-taking strategies to get better and to prepare for the state test	Mastery Strategy- Note Taking
A	3	We're mostly focusing on different types of essays	That's (writing essays) is a big part of our state test	Performance-Producing Different Types of Essays
A	4	We read...right now we are reading Night	We have questions about the theme, how characters are developed, and characterization	Mastery Characterization and Character Development

B	1	We read Frankenstein, and an excerpt from Henrietta Lax...it was really long and you had to read between the lines to get what the author was trying to do	It helped me comprehend what I would do on the state test..she (the teacher) if this is what the text is like on the state test, then you know what you're going to do	Performance: Complete Comprehension Questions that Mimic State Assessment
B	2	My teacher does what the school assigns	In a week span we have vocabulary tests, passages , and think questions	Performance- Vocabulary, Tests, Passages, Questions
B	3	Usually we just read and answer questions about the story		Performance- Read and Answer Questions
B	4	Workbooks; we do a bunch of focus questions and some think questions and then we test		Performance- Read and Answer Questions

### **Instructional Needs: Interest and Relevance**

The third theme, Relevance and Interests, indicates that students describe reading motivation in terms of interests and relevance, and classroom instruction either meets those needs or not. When asked about the role their teachers play in motivating their reading motivation, Students A report ways their teacher provides specific instructional strategies for them to become better readers. For instance, one student explained, “She gets on the board and she draws stick figures and write character traits. She puts it in a way that makes you want to learn it”. In contrast, only ½ of the students from School B reported instructional strategies that their teacher use to promote reading motivation. The other ½ reported the teacher emphasizes grades or does not address interest. Table 8 shows the findings in terms of the students basic needs for relatedness being met.

Classroom observations validated findings. Students of School A were provided choice regarding reading content as well as choice about preferred way of completing assignments. Students had an opportunity to choose reading selections for their literature review. Students of School B were not given choice about assignments and about regulation of assignments. The teacher determined content and the course of action for how that content would be taught. She modeled expected outcomes for assignments as she expected students to regurgitate her expectation. Consistently, the teacher assigned students reading assignments with no consideration for choice or their preferred interests.

Table 8

*Data Display of Students' Perception of Assignments Relevance and Interests*

School	Participant	Response	Explanation (Why)	Classroom Instruction (Impact)
A	1	Well, when it comes to exams and big tests, it's hard to get into it and actually like want to learn more	I mean...if it's something I'm interested in like football....I'll get into it	Reading Interests Positive Impact
A	2	It comes down to what the story is about	If it's a story that my particular personality finds interesting, then it's not hard at all	Relevant Reading Positive Impact
A	3	I think I'm more motivated now than I used to be because Ms. XXX the way she is	She is not like some teachers who just sit there and hand it out to you; she communicates ....she tries really hard to make sure we get this; she wants us to do well on state tests so she breaks it down...	Teacher Interaction Positive Impact
A	4	Not very	I just don't want to read...I don't like the passages...they don't interest me	Lack of Reading Interest Negative Impact

B	1	Well, our class is circled around reading	I like to read	Intrinsic Motivation for Reading Positive Impact
B	2	I come into the classroom and all the stories that we read, they are usually not interesting and it's hard to...I mean...understand	I am motivated by the fact that I want to pass	Lack of Interest Goal Content Performance Based Negative Impact
B	3	I'm not too motivated to read	It doesn't interest me	Lack of Reading Interests Negative Impact
B	4	I know I have to read so that kinda motivates me enough	I'm one of those people who like to have all A's	Goal Content Performance Based Negative Impact

### **Internalized Behavior: Growth VS Fixed Mindset**

The fourth and final theme, Fixed or Growth Mindsets, indicates that students attribute their reading motivation success and persistence to internalized behavior or a growth or fixed mindset. Students from both schools reported difficulty focusing and difficulty completing fresh reads with more rigor and complexity as challenges for their reading motivation. Their reasons for motivation success were opposite of each other. Students from School A reported goal attainment (I have to meet certain standards) or intrinsic motivation (You gotta do it if you want to get better) as reasons for their reading motivation success while the majority of students from School B contributed their reading motivation success to goal attainment (wanting to pass) and academic performance (wanting to make all A's). Table 9 shows the findings that lead to the theme.

Classroom observations validate these findings. The classroom language of School A included conversations about mastery and growth. Teacher A checked in with students about their progress and allowed them to revise assignments. She created opportunities for all students to discuss mistakes in a constructive way. The classroom language of School B included conversations about assignment completion and assignment requirements. Students either completed assignments with accuracy or not. There was no conversation about improvement. No feedback given to students beyond the grade.



Table 9

*Data Display of Students Perception of the Teacher's Role of Motivating Students9*

School	Participant	Response	Explanation (Why)	Classroom Instruction (Impact)
A	1	She breaks it down with the notes and then she like...she relates it back to our own experiences	When you really connect with someone in the story, it makes a whole lot of difference	Relatedness Personal Connection
A	2	She kinda puts her own twist on it	...Mrs. XXX she like...she tries to find a way that fits our personality so that way we are able to understand it	Relatedness Personality Connection
A	3	She gets on the board and she draws stick figures and write character traits	She puts it in a way that makes you want to learn it	Relatedness Way that Makes You Want to Learn
A	4	She tries to give us passages that could help us relate to them...like we had a passage about cars and how they are going to be in the future...	...that was pretty cool, but I still did not want to read about cars	Relatedness But I still did not want to learn

B	1	She plays videos to gain our attention	Like videos from where the text came from	Lack of Relevance  Videos w/ No Personal Connection
B	2	I mean we never really talk about the fact that this is boring	I don't think she knows	Lack of Relevance  Teacher Unaware
B	3	She puts us in groups	Let us help each other out	Relatedness  Social Impact
B	4	She emphasizes our grades and emphasizes how important the state test is to graduation		Lack of Relevance  Grades/State Assessment

The four themes discovered in this study create a comprehensive picture of reading instruction in a high stakes testing environment. The four essentially explain how outside pressure (testing environment) impacts the classroom instruction that impacts reading motivation. This study has shown two classrooms with four themes working distinctively different. In School A, students' perception of their self-reading is positively influenced by their exposure to classroom instruction that promotes mastery over their performance. Students become accustomed to seeking ways to improve their reading, and a lot of this motivation is due to their exposure to classroom assignments that value mastery. Their exposure to mastery helps shift their mindset to one of growth, giving them endurance and determination to complete difficult reading assignments. Though students from School B have the same positive self-perception for reading, their continual exposure to reading instruction that focuses on performance leads to increased motivation for performing. The end result becomes the focus of grades, not improvement. Instead of developing a growth mindset, students develop a fixed mindset that strengthen their idea that reading is performing. Unfortunately, when students come to a difficult, challenging reading task, they lack the determination to continue. As a result, they become frustrated, and their frustration manifests itself as no motivation. The teacher usually views these students as unmotivated, not caring when this perception may not be completely true. Students just may not have the skill set to do more than perform.

## **CHAPTER V: DISCUSSION**

Case studies typically end with a discussion of the findings, and this case study follows that format. The following chapter provides a discussion of themes in relationship to the findings and classroom implications, provides a discussion of the limitations as they relate to the study, provides future directions for research, and provides a conclusion that provides an answer to the central research question of the study.

### **Self-Concept of Reading**

According to Marinak, Gambrell, & Mazzoni (2013), higher performing students typically have positive self concepts as is the case in this study. The goal content (reason for pursuing the goal) of these students is that of performing. Classroom experiences can positively or negatively impact students' self-concept of reading as well as impact their goal content. Classroom instruction that provide opportunities for students to read text that they can read without assistance, provides students freedom to explore, browse, and change their minds about reading topics, and provides consistent feedback that is specific positively impact readers' self concept (Marinak, Gambrell, & Mazzoni 2013). Classroom instruction that praises students for their intelligence and that engage in public displays of humiliation negatively impact student self-concept of reading (Marinak, Gambrell, & Mazzoni 2013).

Classrooms that promote grades and completing assignments without time for revising and refining, promote performance over mastery (Ryan & Deci 2000; Deci & Ryan 2002; Ryan & Deci 2017). Students become accustomed to reading for the grade, not reading for value, joy, or the goal of becoming a better reader.

Though students from School A and School B have a positive self-concept for reading, students from School A may describe their self-concept of reading in terms of growth because their classroom instruction is tied more to growth than to performance. Students from School B may describe their self-concept of reading in terms of performance because more value is placed on performing than on mastery. In turn, performance-based driven instruction tends to foster the idea that reading is performance, not mastery (Ryan & Deci 2000; Deci & Ryan 2002; Ryan & Deci 2017). As a result, when students do not perform well, they tend to give up trying. Then, teachers are left with students who do not care to read because they do not see it as a process, something that gradually improves with time and practice.

### **Deep or Wide Reading**

Deep reading, the active process of deliberate reading, is a process that promotes mastery whereas wide reading, reading a wide range of texts, is one that--if not purposefully implemented--will promote performance over mastery (Guthrie, 2008). In an effort to cover standards that are included on state assessments, many schools have dropped some best practices that have proven beneficial, and one such practice is independent reading (Miller & Moss, 2013). Instead of purposely choosing rich texts that lend themselves to expanding beyond comprehension questions, teachers choose texts that they feel mimic state assessments. So that

students have ample practice, their English instruction consists of a gamut of reading passages and comprehension questions. Eventually, students began to view reading as a performance rather than a process that gets better over time.

This study revealed the positive and negative impact of deep and wide reading. Students from school A spent a lot of time reading, but they also spent time making sense of that reading through note taking strategies, writing, and character development. It seems as though students understand that the goal is read deeply, with intent and for purpose. Students from School B took on a lot of reading as well, but they read for the purpose of completing reading comprehension questions. Nothing happened beyond the grade for the assignment. Students are given a wide range of reading selections, but these are given for the purpose of building stamina for state assessment, not for building reading capacity.

### **Interests and Relevance**

One of students' basic needs is relatedness (Ryan and Deci 2002, 2017). When this need is not met, the end result is little or no motivation. Ryan and Deci define relatedness as something an individual perceives as interesting and relevant, something to which they can connect. When students find an assignment interesting, he more than likely participates with great motivation. However, when a student feels that he can not relate to a task, he disconnects or simply complete the task because of an external pressure. In the case of this study, students reading motivation is tied to their level of interests and relevance. When students found an assignment interesting, they explained, "It's not hard at all." However, when students had no interests for an assignment, the grade for the assignment became their focus. Reading was no

longer the priority because it was second to getting a desired grade; therefore, students did not try to improve in reading as long as their grades indicated great performance.

Typically, the teacher is the person who controls classroom instruction; therefore, students look to the teacher to provide interest and relevance. This study indicated that when the teacher helped students make personal connections, “She puts it in a way that makes you want to learn.” Students were more apt to read because they valued the effort the teachers put into trying to make assignments relevant and interesting. When students perceived an assignment not be interesting or relevant, the student typically resorted to some external pressure for motivation. Students from School A were exposed to more assignments that they perceived interesting or relevant, and this exposure is because of their teacher. Whereas, students from School B, reported more negative experiences with interest and relevance, reporting the teacher’s obliviousness to their boredom, the external pressure that motivates them, or strategies that have helped in the past.

### **Growth VS Fixed Mindset**

Students described their reading motivation success and reading persistence in terms of a fixed or growth mindset, and though Carol Dweck (2006,2016) makes clear that the fixed or growth mindset manifest early in life, she also makes clear that certain environments foster one mindset over the other. According to her definition, A “fixed mindset” assumes that intelligence and creative abilities are givens which can not change in any meaningful way. A “growth mindset,” on the other hand, thrives on challenge and sees failure not as evidence of unintelligence but as an opportunity for growth and for stretching our existing abilities (Carol Dweck 2006, 2016).

Classroom environments that foster mastery over performance, reflection and progress over pass fail grades, and mistakes over perfection, foster the growth mindset, and as a result, students become build stamina and persistence for challenges. In this study, most students from School A and School B had internalized motivation for reading because they had a personal desire to become better students to meet challenges (Table 9). However, when asked about persistence and endurance for reading motivation, a clear difference between School A and School B (Table 10). This difference may be attributed to the difference in classroom instruction. Each day, Teacher A found ways to challenge students to think critically, critique others work, to revise and edit work, to master processes for note taking, writing essays, constructing responses. When students came to challenging texts, they pushed through because they had the idea that quitting is not an option. When students did not understand something, they completed extra assignments or sought help outside of school because for them, mediocrity was not an option. Though the teacher gave grades, she gave them with the intent of the student reviewing and revising his or her work to create something better. Students from School B focused their attention on performance, turning in assignments for grades. Unfortunately, their classroom environment fostered this behavior. Rarely were students given chances to critique and or revise their work. Rarely were they given opportunities to learn from their mistakes. Instead of fostering growth, the teacher unconsciously, fostered performance but became discouraged when students did not try to become better students. As a result, the teacher was left with students who had the mindset, “If it’s on the state test, I need to know it.” They were left with the idea that their reading and capabilities did not need to extend beyond the state assessment.



## **Limitations**

First and foremost, this is the researcher's first time conducting a qualitative study, so it is safe to include experience as a limitation. Though the researcher planned for interview questions to be semi-structured questions that should take 50 minutes, the interviews lasted from 12-38 minutes. The researcher had a difficult time pulling out more information once the interviewee had answered a question.

Secondly, qualitative research is perspective-based and highly subjective. Two people can be in the same environment and perceive that environment in totally different ways. Because this data is perspective-based, no test was run to determine accuracy or to produce statistics that can be used to compare norms. Moreover, qualitative research samples are typically small. This study, for instance, used a sample of two teachers and eight students. Though the researcher chose teachers of the same grade level and content, their amount of experience and school environments are different. Though Teacher B has the most experience, her experience with high school students is less than one year. Findings indicate that she was less effective in promoting reading motivation through classroom instruction. This may be due to the fact that this is her first year with high school students, and she has to spend more time preparing curriculum than does Teacher B, who has the most experience with high school students. Though both schools have a B accountability rating, School B's proficiency rate is lower than School A. The school environment for each school may be different in that one school may allow more teacher autonomy. Overall, though qualitative research is valuable in helping researchers answer "why" questions, its findings are limited in that they are not necessarily generalizable to other contexts.

## **Implications and Future Direction**

Overall, the study implies that effective instructional practices must take into account students' motivation for reading. Though it is beneficial to learn best practices for instructing reading, it is equally important to explore ways to improve student motivation as well.

Additional professional development opportunities that demonstrate ways to replace extrinsic motivation of grades to more intrinsic motivation of mastery will lead to student persistence and continued growth. Therefore, best practices for reading instruction in the secondary classroom should include ways in which to spark intrinsic motivation.

Furthermore, the study implies that high stakes testing negatively impacts students' reading motivation if classroom teachers value students' performance on the state assessment over mastery of reading standards. The focus on student performance may help explain low mastery rates on NAEP reading in some states. When students strive to obtain a passing score (i.e. basic), they often fail to improve reading skills, making it difficult for students to reach higher levels of mastery (i.e. proficient and advanced). The goal of mastery is to increase knowledge and competence, and as a result may naturally increase student performance. In a perfect world, high stakes testing would have little to no bearing on students' reading motivation when instruction focuses on the mastery of reading standards. Students have become conditioned to striving to earn a passing score instead of becoming better readers.

Teacher motivation impacts their instructional practices. If the their motivation is to teach reading for the purpose of students performing at a passing level on the high stakes test, teachers create test driven environments, producing students who will focus on getting a certain grade. If the their motivation is to teach mastery of standards of reading, the teacher creates a classroom

environment that exposes students to more opportunities for reading and ways to improve that reading. Over time, students focus on improvement rather than on grades. Similar to the way classroom environment positively or negatively impacts students' motivation, educational systems positively or negatively teachers' motivation. Systems, which truly focus on mastery in turn, allow teachers the freedom to teach standards. Many times teachers focus on student performance because they are constantly reminded of the school's end of the year performance goal for accountability or adequate yearly progress. Teacher B felt this pressure, and as a result, she created a classroom environment that promoted performance. Though Teacher A was aware of the end of the year assessment, her awareness did not drive her motivation. She was motivated by her student's mastery of reading.

Future research could investigate a sample of teachers from the same school so to can discover what impacts the overall school environment has on teacher motivation. Another extension of the study could highlight a sample of teachers with the same level of experience teaching reading thus giving researchers an idea how teacher experience impacts their understanding of student motivation in the secondary reading classroom.

Finally, the study could include a mixed methods approach that could examine the correlation of classroom practice and student motivation. Such a study would be helpful in building a body of literature for best practices for promoting students' intrinsic motivation for reading. Another interesting study correlation between a teacher's noted beliefs and his or her actions in the classroom. This would provide research for reflective teaching and motivation as a means of improving student outcomes. A study of this magnitude can be done to provide educational insight in the realm of teaching and learning and in improving student behavior.

## **Conclusion**

In summation, the researcher would like to provide an answer to the central question for this study: How do teachers successfully balance reading motivation in a high stakes tested high school English class? This study has shown that students' perceptions of their classroom environment determines their level of reading motivation. Positive reinforcement of self-determination theories produces positive outcomes for reading motivation; therefore, teachers who are trying to find a balance should incorporate reading strategies that value student interests, that favor mastery over performance, and that promote intrinsic motivation instead of extrinsic factors. Teachers should focus on the process of reading, providing opportunities for students to dig deep into texts and communicate about them in multiple ways. This balance can be accomplished, but it takes careful planning, students input, and lots of revising along the way. Through planning and teacher collaboration, School A figured out how to incorporate strategies for ongoing support, for motivating readers, and for challenging students into everyday teaching across multiple disciplines, and as result, students perform well on state tests without performance being the guiding factor of the class.

Consider this, a track runner conditions, trains, and works all year with his track coach in preparation for a marathon. Preparation becomes a part of the runner's daily routine, but it does not encompass his whole day. Over the course of time, he grows stronger, becomes more fit, and consistently demonstrates his personal best, indicating that he is better as a runner. The day of the race, he starts out a head of everybody else, but he trips and falls short of the finish line and comes in last place. Is he a failure? Is the coach to blame because he failed to expose the runner to the possibility of falling?

Educational accountability is double edge sword in that it holds educational systems accountable for educating all, but also it has the potential to stifle progress if it becomes the sole purpose of academic instruction. Students and teachers of high stakes testing classrooms are faced with this dilemma on a daily basis as they juggle to find instructional balance. On one hand, the teacher is expected to create lessons that expose students to academic standards that are designed to help them become well rounded individuals. On the other hand, teachers are expected to teach test taking skills that will promote passing on state assessments. Teachers and students who are in school systems that promote performance over mastery usually feel the pressure to perform well. As a result, mastery is no longer the goal. However, teachers and students who work in school systems that promote mastery usually feel pressure to continue to demonstrate academic growth, and this academic growth usually leads to greater academic performance.

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## **LIST OF APPENDICES**



## **APPENDICIES**

### **APPENDIX A: REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH**

School District

Address

City, State, Zip Code

Dear Superintendent:

I am a doctoral student at the University of Mississippi. The research I wish to conduct for my dissertation involves exploring the reading motivation of high school students who are proficient readers and the teachers who teach them.. This project will be conducted under the supervision of my dissertation chair, Dr. Rosemary Oliphant-Ingham.

I am hereby seeking your consent to interview a sample of 10th grade students and teachers as well as observe a 10th grade English classroom. The research will include only the 10th grade population with a sample size of four students per teacher. To begin the process, I will ask the teacher to identify and rank the top 16 students of one tenth grade English class using 8th grade MAAP scores. Next, I will request parent permission to survey selected students. Then, I will ask the 16 students to take an interests and reading survey. The four students who score the highest on the survey will be asked to participate in the study. As part of the study, I will conduct interviews during the four students' non-instructional times and during teachers' planning or before or after school. In addition to conducting interviews, I will also observe the 10th grade English classroom during normal instruction hours a maximum of six 50-minute sessions. The aim of this study is to allow students and teachers to describe what practices promote or demote reading motivation

I have attached a copy of the interview questions and observation protocols to be used in the research process. Before beginning research at your school, I will provide you with a copy of the approval letter for the study from the University of Mississippi's Institutional Review Board (IRB) and a timeline for participants' interviews and of classroom observation dates.

Upon completion of the study, I will provide the school district with a bound copy of the full research report. If you require any further information, please do not hesitate to contact me @ [plgarth@go.olemiss.edu](mailto:plgarth@go.olemiss.edu) or 662.523.5915. Thank you for your time and consideration in this matter.

Sincerely,

Pasteia Garth

University of Mississippi

## **APPENDIX B: INVITATION LETTERS**

### **Invitation Letter for Teacher**

Date

Dear (Insert Participant's Name):

This letter is an invitation to consider participating in a study I am conducting as part of my doctoral degree in the Department of Teacher Instruction at the University of Mississippi under the supervision of Dr. Rosemary Oliphant-Ingham. I would like to provide you with more information about this project and what your involvement would entail if you decide to take part.

Reading achievement has been at the forefront of educational research for years. The era of No Child Left Behind promoted reading proficiency for all students, and the current mandates of the Every Child Succeeds Act continues the trend of holding educators accountable for the success or failure of students' reading proficiency. Despite initiatives, most high school students do not score proficient on national reading assessments. What is the phenomenon, you may ask? Only the students and teachers who are impacted by this phenomenon can give truth to this question; therefore, the purpose of this study is to describe the experience of the proficient high school student and the teacher who teaches him or her.

This study will focus on reading motivation at the high school level of education. You are a part of this level of education, and your voice could give insight to best practices for promoting reading motivation in the classroom. Therefore, I would like to include you to be involved in my study. I believe that because you are actively involved in high school education, you are best suited to speak to the various issues concerning reading motivation and instruction.

Participation in this study is voluntary. It will involve an interview of approximately 60 minutes in length to take place in a mutually agreed upon location. You may decline to answer any of the interview questions if you so wish. Further, you may decide to withdraw from this study at any time without any negative consequences by the researcher. With your permission, the interview will be tape-recorded to facilitate collection of information and later transcribed for analysis. Shortly after the interview has been completed, I will send you a copy of the transcript to give you an opportunity to confirm the accuracy of our conversation and to add to or clarify any points that you wish. Furthermore, I would like to interview your class to gain insight about instructional practices. All information you provide is considered completely confidential. Your name will not appear in any report resulting from this study; however, with your permission anonymous quotations may be used. Data collected during this study will be locked in a secure location. Only researchers associated with this project will have access. There are no known or anticipated risks to you as a participant in this study.

If you have any questions regarding this study, or would like additional information to assist you in reaching a decision about participation, please contact me by e-mail at [plgarth@go.olemiss.edu](mailto:plgarth@go.olemiss.edu).

I would like to assure you that this study has been reviewed and has received ethics clearance through the Institutional Review Board (IRB) at the University of Mississippi. However, the final decision about participation is yours.

I hope that the results of my study will be of benefit to those high school students who are proficient readers as well as to those high school teachers who teach them. Hopefully, the results will give guidance in reform efforts of public education.

I very much look forward to speaking with you and thank you in advance for your assistance in this project.

Sincerely,

Pasteia Garth

## **Invitation Letter for Parent of Participants Under 18**

Date

Dear Parent or Guardian:

This letter is an invitation to consider allowing your child to participate in a study I am conducting as part of my doctoral degree in the Department of Teacher Instruction at the University of Mississippi under the supervision of Dr. Rosemary Oliphant Ingham. I would like to provide you with more information about this project and what your child's involvement would entail if you decide to allow ( him or her) to take part.

This study will focus on reading motivation at the high school level of education. Your (son or daughter) is a part of this level of education, and (his or her) voice could give insight to best practices for promoting reading motivation in the classroom. Therefore, I would like to include (Student's Name) to be involved in my study.

Participation in this study is voluntary. It will involve a 12 question survey about reading interests, an interview of approximately 60 minutes in length to take place in a mutually agreed upon location at school, and 6 classroom observations. Your (son or daughter) may decline to answer any of the interview questions if (he or she) so wishes. Further, ( your son or daughter) may decide to withdraw from this study at any time without any negative consequences by the researcher. With your permission, the interview of (your son or daughter) will be tape-recorded to facilitate collection of information, and later transcribed for analysis. Shortly after the interview has been completed, I will send (your son or daughter) a copy of the transcript to give (him or her) an opportunity to confirm the accuracy of our conversation and to add or clarify any points. All information provided is considered completely confidential. Your (son's or daughter's) name will not appear in any report resulting from this study, however, with permission, anonymous quotations may be used. Only researchers associated with this project will have access to collected data. There are no known or anticipated risks to participants in this study as this study has been reviewed and received ethics clearance through the Institutional Review Board (IRB) at the University of Mississippi.

Thank you in advance for your assistance in this project. If you have any questions regarding this study, or would like additional information to assist you in reaching a decision about participation, please contact me by e-mail at [plgarth@go.olemiss.edu](mailto:plgarth@go.olemiss.edu).

Sincerely,

Pasteia Garth

## **Invitation Letter for Student**

Date

Dear (Insert Participant's Name):

This letter is an invitation to consider participating in a study I am conducting as part of my doctoral degree in the Department of Teacher Instruction at the University of Mississippi under the supervision of Dr. Rosemary Oliphant-Ingham. You are a part of this level of education, and your voice could give insight to best practices for promoting reading motivation in the classroom. Participation in this study is voluntary. It will involve a survey of 12 questions, and an interview of approximately 50 minutes in length to take place in a mutually agreed upon location. You may decline to answer any of the interview questions if you so wish. Further, you may decide to withdraw from this study at any time without any negative consequences by the researcher. With your permission, the interview will be tape-recorded to facilitate collection of information and later transcribed for analysis. Shortly after the interview has been completed, I will send you a copy of the transcript to give you an opportunity to confirm the accuracy of our conversation and to add to or clarify any points that you wish. All information you provide is considered completely confidential. Your name will not appear in any thesis or report resulting from this study; however, with your permission anonymous quotations may be used. Only researchers associated with this project will have access to collected data. There are no known or anticipated risks to you as a participant in this study as this study has been reviewed and received ethics clearance through the Institutional Review Board (IRB) at the University of Mississippi.

I very much look forward to speaking with you and thank you in advance for your assistance in this project. If you have any questions regarding this study, or would like additional information to assist you in reaching a decision about participation, please contact me by e-mail at [plgarth@go.olemiss.edu](mailto:plgarth@go.olemiss.edu).

Sincerely,

Pasteia Garth

## **APPENDIX C: REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH**

### **Consent to Participate in Research (Participants Under 18)**

Study Title: Balancing Reading Motivation: A Phenomenology of High School Students and Their Teacher

Investigator:

Pasteia Garth, EdS

280 County Road 1023

Plantersville, MS 38862

(662) 5235915

plgarth@go.olemiss.edu

Faculty Sponsor

Rosemary Oliphant-Ingham, PhD

Department of Teacher Education

331 Guyton Hall

University of Mississippi

University, MS 38677

662-915-7589

ringham@olemiss.edu

Before completing this consent form, please certify that you are 18 years or older by checking the statement that best describes your age category:

\_\_\_\_\_ I am 18 years or older.

\_\_\_\_\_ I am under 18 years old.

The purpose of this study

The purpose of this study is for students and their teachers to describe reading motivation in the high school English classroom.



What you will do for this study

Your child will complete 12 question survey about his or her reading interests.

Your child will complete a 60 minute interview

The experimenter will observe your child in his or her English II class for 50 minutes a total of 6 times.

Time Required for this study

This study will take 30 minutes for the survey, 60 minutes for the interview, 300 minutes for the six 50 minute observations--the total time for the study is 390 minutes.

Possible risks for your participation

Please see the confidentiality section for information on how we minimize the risk of a breach of confidentiality, which is the only risk anticipated with this study.

Benefits from your participation

Your child should not expect benefits from participating in this study. However, your child might experience satisfaction from contributing to scientific knowledge. Also, answering the survey and interview questions might make your child more aware of practices that improve reading motivation.

Incentives

There are no incentives.

Confidentiality

Research team members will have access to your records. The researcher will protect confidentiality by physically separating information that identifies your child from his or her responses (which is even safer than how medical records are stored today).

Members of the Institutional Review Board (IRB) – the committee responsible for reviewing the ethics of, approving, and monitoring all research with humans – have authority to access all records. However, the IRB will request identifiers only when necessary. We will not release identifiable results of the study to anyone else without written consent unless required by law.

### Confidentiality and Use of Audio Recording

Audio Recording will allow the researcher to notate your child's interview responses and accurately transcribe them. The following precautions will be taken:

1. Only the research team will have access.
2. Tapes will be destroyed after the end of the study – which is expected to be spring semester, 2019.
3. Tapes will be locked in a file cabinet in a locked office.

### Right to Withdraw

Your child does not have to volunteer or participate in this study, and there is no penalty if your child refuses. If your child starts the study and decides that he or she does not want to finish, just tell the experimenter. Whether or not your child participates or withdraws will not affect his or her current or future relationship with the Department of Teacher Education, or with the University, and it will not cause your child to lose any benefits to which he or she is entitled.

The experimenter may terminate your child's participation in the study without regard to consent and for any reason such as protecting your child's safety and protecting the integrity of the research data.

### IRB Approval

This study has been reviewed by The University of Mississippi's Institutional Review Board (IRB). If you have any questions or concerns regarding your child's rights as a research participant, please contact the IRB at (662) 915-7482 or [irb@olemiss.edu](mailto:irb@olemiss.edu).

Please ask the experimenter if there is anything that is not clear or if you need more information. When all your questions have been answered, then decide if you want your child to be in the study or not.

#### Statement of Consent

I have read the above information. I have been given an unsigned copy of this form. I have had an opportunity to ask questions, and I have received answers. I consent to allow my child to participate.

Furthermore, I also affirm that the experimenter explained the study to me and told me about the study's risks as well as my child's right to refuse to participate and to withdraw, and that I am the parent/legal guardian of the child listed below.

Signature\_\_\_\_\_ Date\_\_\_\_\_

Printed Name of Parent/Legal Guardian\_\_\_\_\_

Printed Name of Child\_\_\_\_\_

#### Consent to Participate in Research (Participants 18 or Older)

Study Title: Balancing Reading Motivation: A Phenomenology of High School Students and Their Teacher

Investigator:

Pasteia Garth, EdS

377 Guyton Hall

Faculty Sponsor

Rosemary Oliphant-Ingham, PhD

Department of Teacher Education

University, MS 38677  
plgarth@go.olemiss.edu

337 Guyton Hall  
University of Mississippi  
University, MS 38677

\_\_\_\_\_ By providing my initials, I certify that I am 18 years of age or older.

The purpose of this study

The purpose of this study is for students and their teachers to describe reading motivation in the high school English classroom.

What you will do for this study

You will complete a 60-minute interview

You will allow the researcher to observe your English II class for 50 minute a total of 6 times.

Time Required for this study

This study will take 60 minutes for the interview, 300 minutes for the six 50-minute observations--the total time for the study is 360 minutes.

Possible risks for your participation

There are no known risks to this study.

### Benefits from your participation

You should not expect benefits from participating in the study. However, you may experience satisfaction from contributing to research in a field directly related to your chosen profession.

### Incentives

There are no incentives.

### Confidentiality

Research team members will have access to your records. We will protect confidentiality by physically separating information that identifies you from your responses.

Members of the Institutional Review Board (IRB) have the authority to access all records. However, the IRB will request identifiers only when necessary.

### Right to Withdraw

Your participation is voluntary, and there is no penalty if you refuse. If you start the study and decide that you do not want to finish, simply tell the researcher. Whether or not you participate or withdraw will not affect your current or future ...

The researcher may terminate your participation in the study without regard to your consent and for any reason such as protecting your safety and protecting the integrity of the research data.

### IRB Approval

This study has been reviewed by the University of Mississippi's Institutional Review Board (IRB). The IRB determined that the study fulfills the human research subject protections obligations required by state and federal law and University policies. If you have any questions,

concerns, or reports regarding your rights as a participant of research, please contact the IRB at (662) 915-7482 or [irb@olemiss.edu](mailto:irb@olemiss.edu)

#### Statement of Consent

I have read the above information. I have been given a copy of this form. I have had an opportunity to ask questions, and I have received answers. I consent to participate in the study.

Furthermore, I also affirm that the researcher explained the study to me and told me about the study's risks as well as my right to refuse to participate and withdraw.

---

Signature of Participant

---

Date

---

Printed Name of Participant

## **APPENDIX D: Credentials of Education Committee**

### Credentials of Education Committee

Teacher	Teaching Experience	Current Position
Amy Alexander	25 Years Middle/High School English Teacher	Career Coach
Angel Barnett	5 Years Middle School English Teacher /Special Education Teacher	Special Education Teacher
Mark Hitt	24 Years High School History Teacher/ Middle School Principal	Curriculum Director
Sharon Key	26 Years Elementary Special Education Teacher/Elementary Language Arts Teacher	Language Arts Teacher

## **APPENDIX E: FEEDBACK SURVEY & INTERVIEW QUESTIONS**

Directions: Please review the following questions and provide feedback if you feel that the question is not clear, too vague, or does not relate to the central question.

What is your grade classification?

Sub-question one: What do students who are proficient readers and their English teachers identify as having an impact on their classroom experience--instruction, classroom climate, and reading motivation?

- How do you view yourself as a reader?
- What kind of reading assignments do you complete in English class?
- Describe your experience with reading motivation in your classroom? So how motivated are you to do the reading assignments?
- What does your English teacher do to motivate you to read? i
- What does your district do to encourage reading?
- What is your favorite books to read?

Sub-question: What do students who are proficient readers and their English teacher identify to be their biggest challenge in the English classroom.

- Describe what is most difficult about reading assignments that your English teacher gives?

Sub-question: What do students who are proficient readers and their teachers identify to be most helpful to students' successful reading in English class?

- With what kind of reading assignments do you have the most success?
- Why do you think you're successful in English class?
- What keeps you motivated to keep reading an English assignment when it's not particularly interesting or easy



## VITA

### *Dr. Pasteia Betts Garth*

(662) 5235915 (Home)

280 Road 1023

pasteiagarth@yahoo.com

(662) 963.3395 (Work)

Plantersville, Mississippi 38862

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## PROFESSIONAL PROFILE

Energetic, data-driven instructional leader with 16 years of experience at the school and district level

- *Skilled in Curriculum Development and Alignment*
- *Experienced in Personnel Management & Evaluation*
- *Trained in Budget & Finance*
- *Knowledgeable of Special Education Policies and Procedures*
- *2010 Teacher of the Year*
- *2012 District Teacher of the Year*
- *2016 Executive Director of Saving Grace Summer Camp*
- *2018 Mississippi Department of Education Curriculum Committee*

## ADMINISTRATIVE EXPERIENCE

### **Nettleton School District**

#### **Director of Special Education**

2016-Present

Develops, align, and implement the district's policies and procedures in accordance to MS Department of Education IDEA guidelines for all four schools

**Nettleton Jr. High School, Nettleton, MS**

**Lead Teacher/Curriculum Director Assistant**

2011-2016

Oversee the implementation of State and District Curriculum; Schedule and provide district-wide professional development for all employees. Conducted Professional Learning Communities and Data Meetings.

**TEACHING EXPERIENCE**

**Itawamba Community College**

2015-

2017

**Dual Enrollment English Composition Teach**

Planned and conducted lesson plans and activities for a balanced program of instruction, demonstration, and assessment. Established engaging learning opportunities for all students including lessons, units, and projects and communicated these objectives to students.

**Tupelo High School Advancement Academy ,Tupelo, MS**

**Teacher**

2010-2011

Planned and conducted lesson plans and activities for a balanced program of instruction, demonstration, and assessment. Established engaging learning opportunities for all students including lessons, units, and projects and communicated these objectives to students.

**Nettleton High School**

2007-2010

**Classroom Teacher/Coach**

Planned and conducted lesson plans and activities for a balanced program of instruction, demonstration, and assessment. Established engaging learning opportunities for all students including lessons, units, and projects and communicated these objectives to students.

**Nettleton Junior High School**

2003-2007

**Classroom Teacher/Coach**

Planned and conducted lesson plans and activities for a balanced program of instruction, demonstration, and assessment. Established engaging learning opportunities for all students including lessons, units, and projects and communicated these objectives to students.

**West Point High School**

2002-2003

**Classroom Teacher**

Planned and conducted lesson plans and activities for a balanced program of instruction, demonstration, and assessment. Established engaging learning opportunities for all students including lessons, units, and projects and communicated these objectives to students.

## **EDUCATION**

### **Doctor of Philosophy in Education**

**Present**

The University of Mississippi

University, MS

***Major:*** Teacher Education

### **Specialist in Education**

**December 2010**

The University of Mississippi

University, MS

***Major:*** Secondary Curriculum and Instruction

### **Master of Science in Curriculum**

**May 2006**

Mississippi State University

Starkville, MS

***Major:*** Secondary English Education

### **Bachelor of Science**

**May 2002**

Mississippi State University

University, MS

***Major:*** Secondary Education

## **CERTIFICATIONS/ADVANCED PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

486 Career Level Administrator

Mississippi Department of Education

*Mississippi School Boards Association Prospective Superintendent Leadership Academy, 2018*

## **MEMBERSHIPS AND AFFILIATIONS**

Mississippi Professional Educators (MPE)

## REFERENCES

### Professional References:

**Melissa Thomas**

Director of Curriculum

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Tupelo, MS 38804

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**Dr. Ellen Foster**

Assistant Professor

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University, MS 38677

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**Mr. Russell Taylor**

Principal

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Myrtle, MS 38650

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